Fraport to RP: Solve Naia 3 row now, or we will sue

Story Below, Col. I

Neda chief sees prices going up due to ME crisis

By Doris C. Dumlao

CONSUMER prices edged up to 2.7 percent during the year to January due to rising fuel prices, higher power and water rates and the weakening peso.

"We expect inflation to move upward in the coming months due to the impact of the US-Iraq conflict on oil prices and the peso-dollar rate," Economic Planning

NEDA/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Kintanar lost Rolex, cash, 3 guns, golf set

By Christian V. Esguerra

EX-REBEL leader Romulo Kintanar was not only murdered but also robbed of cash, guns and other valuables including a set of golf clubs.

Ironically, it's possible that the stuff was taken by police investigators, and not by the New People's Army hit men who did him in.

KINTANAR/ A4

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Thursday, February 6, 2003 ★★ 42 pages / 4 sections vol. 18 / no. 60 P15 website: www.inq7.net

READY for the worse, the women of Iraq have taken arms (AK-47 rifles) during a show of force in the city of Mosul, 460 km north of Baghdad where thousands of armed volunteers reportedly paraded to defy US threats to oust their president, Saddam Hussein.

REUTERS

Iraq warned: It's 5 minutes to midnight

UNITED NATIONS—Warning Baghdad that it was "five minutes to midnight," chief UN inspector Hans Blix on Tuesday night pleaded with the Iraqi government to produce evidence about its weapons program during his visit there this weekend.

"Isn't there five minutes to midnight in your political assessment?" Blix asked reporters.

A reporter then asked whether that was Blix's assessment.

"Well certainly," he said. "We all know that the situation is very serious."

Tens of thousands of US troops are massing in the Gulf and a third US aircraft carrier, the USS Abraham Lincoln, has now moved within striking distance of Baghdad.

In a taped interview in Baghdad broadcast worldwide also on Tuesday night, however, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein denied he

IRAQ/ A14

Terror warning raised

AFP: Expect 'sympathy attacks' here should war break out

New Palace team takes charge, edges out Dante Ang

By Carlito Pablo and Tony Bergonia

WITH Dante Ang, President Macapagal-Arroyo's personal publicist, "distancing" himself from her, a new power bloc has taken charge of building up the presidential image.

The President herself has created an "informal communications advisory group," according to presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye. He said the group would help rally public support for the President's "reform agenda."

The problem may be that the communications advisers could end up not communicating with one another. There are just too many of them.

The Palace source told the INQUIRER that the proof of Ang being "definitely out," was the presence of members of the communications team who are not on speaking terms with the businessman.

"Once Dante Ang steps in (again), we will move out," said a member of the "new" team.

The entry of a group identified with the 38-year-old press secretary, Her-

NEW/ A14

US WAR FOR IRAQ IS IN-REASONABLE
on IRAQ
PEOPLES PARTY
BUSH IHAW DUG

GRACE CANTAL-ALBASIN/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

CLOSER to home, grim-faced women, the young and the old, with matching placards lead Maranaos in Marawi City in a protest rally against the impending US military action on Iraq.

TERRORISTS may attack US and other foreign, civilian, or government targets in the country if the United States attacks Iraq, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Dionisio Santiago warned yesterday.

Santiago also said "sympathy attacks" by terrorists might target Manila to create a bigger impact.

"The possibility is very strong that it will happen," Santiago told the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines. He said that while there had been no specific threat, the motive of any such attack would probably be "to sow terror ... mainly to make people feel that being sympathetic to the Americans will not work."

"We are always prepared. We have contingency units ready on standby, but they are useless unless we have information," he said, emphasizing the need for cooperation with the public for better intelligence gathering.

While Washington has yet to request assistance from the Philippines regarding the looming war on Iraq, Santiago said it was possible that the government would give overflight rights and allow rest-and-recreation points here for US troops, or even send Filipino troops to help in administrative or technical duties.

He also said the Philippines was being eyed as an alternative training site for US forces.

On Tuesday, President Macapagal-Arroyo took on the stance of US President George W. Bush and called on the United Nations to act with "dispatch and force" if Iraq refuses to disarm. She made her remarks in a nationwide address after meeting with Gen. Eric Shinseki, US Army Chief of Staff.

Yesterday, Senate President Franklin Drilon said Ms Macapagal should have been more prudent so as not to jeopardize the lives and jobs of overseas Filipino workers in the Middle East.

Drilon said the Philippine government should not have stated its position on the matter until US Secretary of State Colin Powell had presented sufficient evidence against Iraq before the United Nations Security Council.

At a news conference, Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes described Shinseki's visit as "routine [and] customary" and where "nothing controversial was discussed."

TERROR/ A14

GERMAN ULTIMATUM

Fraport tells RP: Fix Naia 3 row now, or we sue

GERMAN airport operator Fraport AG will seek World Bank arbitration in its dispute with the Philippine government over the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Terminal 3 unless the government offers a solution "in the next few days rather than weeks."

"My patience is at an end," Wilhelm Bender, the Frankfurt airport operator's chief executive, told Reuters on Tuesday.

Fraport has invested $383 million in the project to build Naia 3, a nearly completed terminal that can handle 13 million passengers yearly, or four times the capacity of the existing main terminal.

Fraport owns 30 percent of the Philippine International Air Terminal Co. (Piatco) that built the terminal, but the pro-

FRAPORT/ A4

Vitamin A 'cousin' may treat lung cancer

WASHINGTON—A cousin of vitamin A may be able to repair some of the genetic damage done by smoking and perhaps even prevent lung cancer, US researchers reported on Tuesday.

They hope their research will help them find ways to prevent lung cancer in former smokers, who have a high risk of the disease even years after they quit.

"The drug we used acts to reverse a genetic abnormality associated with development of lung cancer," said Dr. Jonathan Kurie of the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, who led the study.

Researchers do not believe the drug they used will be the final product since it causes too many side-effects such as rashes. But their study shows there is hope and points researchers down the road toward better compounds.

"The work is a proof of concept, suggesting that compounds like this may prove to have a protective effect against development of precancerous lesions," Kurie said. Such lesions can become cancerous tumors.

More than 45 million Americans have quit smoking and immediately lowered their risk of lung cancer, but half of all newly diagnosed lung cancer

VITAMIN/ A4

LAGS N LAGB KTA!

Pinoy, Asia's text Casanova

By Abigail L. Ho

WHEN it comes to romancing the keypad, no one beats the Filipino.

A recent survey commissioned by mobile phone manufacturer Siemens AG revealed that about one out of every two Filipinos tended to show their affection using their mobile phones.

The survey found that 58 percent of Filipinos—the

PINOY/ A4

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Extreme Northern and Eastern Luzon, Eastern Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers..

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/02/06/03

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Second FrontPage

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

PCGG to auction P25B in 'ill-gotten' Marcos assets to fund land reform

SOME P25 billion worth of property, part of the ill-gotten Marcos wealth, is set to be put on the auction block.

Presidential Commission on Good Government chair Haydee Yorac said proceeds of the sale would support the government's Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

The pieces of real estate up for auction are: the Payanig property along Ortigas Avenue in Pasig, worth P13.4 million; the Piedras Petroleum Corp. property in Mariveles, Bataan, 127.9 hectares, P428.75 million; 4.6 hectares at the Bacolod City Reclamation Area, P280.13 million; 4.2 hectares in Mountainview, Tagaytay City, P200 million; the 4,038-sq. m. IRC property in Parañaque City and 3.875-sq. m. Hans Menzi Compound, P40 million.

Other assets include shares of stock in Radio Philippines Network, P1.3 billion; Intercontinental Broadcasting Corp., P3.07 billion; Philippine National Construction Corp., P600 million; Eastern Telecom Philippines Inc., P450.84 million; Manila Electric Co., P241.5 million; Chemfields Inc., P205.11 million; Oceanic Wireless Network Inc., P80.27 million; Philippine Long Distance and Telephone Co., P4.95 million, and A. Soriano Corp., P4.12 million.

Agrarian Reform Secretary Roberto Pagdanganan said the proceeds would help pay off landowners and provide support services to farmer-beneficiaries."

Pagdanganan said the Department of Agrarian Reform was targeting some 100,000 hectares for distribution to farmers this year, but that the agency had a budget of P2.85 billion budget, good for only half the target. *Christine Gaylican*

UP TO P2 MILLION

Senators raise 'trigger level' for dirty money

By Gerald G. Lacuarta

VOTING 11-10, senators yesterday raised the trigger level in a bill amending the Anti-Money Laundering Act (AMLA) from P500,000 as proposed in previous deliberations, to P2 million, which is half the current legal threshold.

The lowering of the current threshold was the main amendment being pushed by Congress before the Feb. 12 deadline set by the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF)—a coalition of rich countries leading the global campaign against "dirty money"—so that the Philippines might be taken out of its "uncooperative" list.

The task force had demanded the total abolition of the P4 million threshold, insisting that the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas should have full access to all bank accounts. Only accounts over the threshold could be examined under the AMLA.

But the Senate has yet to vote on other proposed amendments which would partially lift bank secrecy laws and allow the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLA) to investigate potential AMLA violations. Banking regulators, however, would be prohibited from using the data for any other purpose.

Before yesterday's voting, Malacañang had warned senators that the economy would suffer if they did not immediately pass the proposed amendments.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said dependents of overseas Filipino workers would also be inconvenienced if foreign banks withheld remittances, as FATF had threatened to do.

Bunye stressed that the effect on the economy was clear, since a "substantial chunk" of the gross national product come from the OFW's remittances."

Last year, 17 million Filipinos working or living abroad sent an estimated $8 billion, an amount nearly equal to the country's agricultural output.

If Senate missed the FATF deadline, Bunye said, the BSP could make special arrangements with international banks and financial institutions, but that these arrangements would be temporary and "limited."

Once they have voted on all proposed amendments, both chambers of Congress would convene a bicameral conference and prepare a final version of the bill for the President's signature.

At the start of the House session yesterday, Speaker Jose de Venecia sought the cooperation of the members in approving the amendments bill this week.

Majority Leader Neptali Gonzales II said the House would hold overtime sessions today and tomorrow. But Manila Rep. Jaime Lopez, chair of the House committee on banks and financial intermediaries was optimistic that the Feb. 12 deadline would be met. *With Dona Pazzibugan, Christine O. Avendaño, and a report from Agence France-Press*

Solon says music still playing for Cha-cha

By Juliet Javellana

THE MOVE to amend the Charter is very much alive despite the enactment of the landmark absentee voting law, Western Samar Rep. Eduardo Nachura said yesterday.

Nachura, chair of the House committee on constitutional amendments, said in a phone interview that a shift to the parliamentary form of government would prevail if approved by a constituent assembly and ratified by the people in a plebiscite.

Nachura said the House leadership had assured him that the plenary debates for House Concurrent Resolution 16 would begin this week if the sessions were extended up to Friday. Nachura had been waiting for the past two weeks to sponsor the resolution on the floor.

He said the resolution would be taken up after the House approves the amendments to the Anti-Money Laundering Act (Amla) and ratifies the Absentee Voting Act.

The resolution, supported by 126 House members, seeks to convene the Senate and the House of Representatives as a constituent assembly to propose amendments, including a change in the form of government.

Davao City Rep. Prospero Nograles said the existence now of a law allowing overseas Filipinos to vote for national officials starting in 2004 would not derail the charter change or Cha-cha move.

Experts had noted that the absentee voting law, which allows absentee voting for president, vice president and senator, would be rendered useless under a parliamentary setup.

"If we pass the constituent assembly resolution, there's still time to do it (Cha-cha)," Nograles said.

Nograles noted that some senators are now in favor of charter change through an assembly.

"We are slowly but surely getting allies in the Senate for a constituent assembly," Nograles said, adding that senators were "known for changing their mind" on issues.

Cost analysis

In a statement, Nachura was quoted as saying that taxpayers would have to shell out a "conservative estimate" of slightly over P2 billion a year if charter change is done through a constitutional convention. He said a convention might take years to complete its work.

Quoting a "cost analysis" by the House Reference and Research Bureau of the Legislative Research Service, Nachura said an assembly on the other hand would cost only P95.6 million.

Nachura said that based on the Senate resolution, a convention would require the election of 418 delegates, at two for each of the country's 209 congressional districts.

He said the expenses would be for the salary of the delegates, staff, rent of space and equipment.

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TWO YEARS AFTER

Ka Popoy's killers still 'out there,' says brother

By Blanche S. Rivera

TWO years after the murder of leftist leader Filemon "Ka Popoy" Lagman and the "elimination" of several former comrades, his family has found another reason to believe that his killers were not from the underground but from "out there," maybe even from government.

The New People's Army's admission of responsibility for the recent slaying of ex-NPA chieftain Romulo Kintanar demolished the police theory that Ka Popoy—former head of the Communist Party of the Philippines' Manila-Rizal Committee—was liquidated by the armed left, his brother said in a statement.

Never did the NPA own up in Ka Popoy's case, his family pointed out.

Former Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman maintained that Ka Popoy had done nothing to provoke his erstwhile comrades to such an extent. "Unlike others who left the underground, he never participated in government's counter-insurgency campaign," the older Lagman said.

"He was a private person fiercely and indefatigably fighting for... the upliftment of the marginalized and the empowerment of disadvantaged sectors like labor and the urban poor," Lagman added. "He was both aboveground and aboveboard."

Blamed on ABB

Exactly two years ago today, Ka Popoy was gunned down in broad daylight, in front of the Bahay ng Alumni inside the University of the Philippines campus in Diliman. He was on his way to a forum on alternative law with his son when two men shot him four times in the head.

Authorities were quick to blame the Alex Boncayao Brigade, the NPA urban hit squad that also used to be under Ka Popoy's command. But the case has remained unsolved, and no suspects were ever arrested.

Lagman said his brother had left the armed wing of the CCP "after decades of struggle without seeing the light at the end of the tunnel."

Ka Popoy resolved to bring his campaign to the political arena, founding legitimate organizations that later won seats in the House of Representatives. He established the multisectoral Sanlakas, the labor-based Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino and the Partido Manggagawa, and the Kapatiran ng mga Pangulo ng Unyon sa Pilipinas.

"There was no overriding motive for the armed left to eliminate him. Their ends were common, only their means were different," Lagman said.

Ka Popoy's family suspects that the authorities are "protecting the culprits rather than vindicating the victim." They said a certain senatorial candidate in the May 2001 polls, on whom Ka Popoy had the goods, could have been the mastermind.

"The candidate had access to sophisticated equipment for accurately monitoring Ka Popoy's communications," Lagman said.

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Rebs raking in billions through extortion—AFP

SANTIAGO

COMMUNIST guerrillas in the country are raking in billions of pesos through extortion, and the costs on the economy could rise after the global community cut off their foreign support, the military said yesterday.

The rebels are most likely being forced to raise operational funding through domestic criminal activities after the United States last year placed them in a blacklist of "foreign terrorist organizations," Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff Dionisio Santiago said.

"They have two sources of funds, the foreign sources and the local sources. Now with their branding as an FTO (foreign terrorist organization) they have a big problem," General Santiago told a Foreign Correspondents Association forum.

The government estimates it is fighting 9,000 NPA rebels, some 5,000 of them armed.

A similar-sized military unit would require P90 million in monthly salaries alone, Santiago said.

He said NPA units imposed so-called "revolutionary taxes" on companies in their sphere of operations. Those who refuse to pay up face punitive guerrilla action, including destruction of company property.

The NPA has recently stepped up attacks on poorly defended economic targets such as P20 million telecommunications towers of private mobile telephone companies.

"One source of income that we have not highlighted is the mining operations in Compostela Valley," Santiago said, referring to a gold rush site on the southern island of Mindanao.

"They're (rebels are) getting over a billion every year," he said.

"That's the Philippine side, one area only. We have a listing of the amounts that they are getting," he said without giving details.

He said the action of the US government, a move matched by Canada and other Western European governments, has succeeded in shutting down or slowing the foreign funding for the rebellion. *AFP*

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Bohol rebel slain

A LOCAL community leader has been assassinated by suspected communist rebels in Bohol, the military said yesterday.

Baldo Betaganzo, chairman of a village district in Bohol, was summoned from his home Monday by suspected New People's Army guerrillas, who shot him dead in his doorway.

On the same day, a military patrol encountered about 10 NPA guerrillas in South Cotabato, resulting in a gun battle which led to the death of a rebel, the military said.

Communist guerrillas in the country have recently stepped up their attacks on civilian targets after they were termed terrorists by the United States and several European governments last year.

The 9,000-strong communist guerrilla movement has been waging a 34-year campaign that has left thousands of people dead and hindered investment into the rural areas. *AFP*

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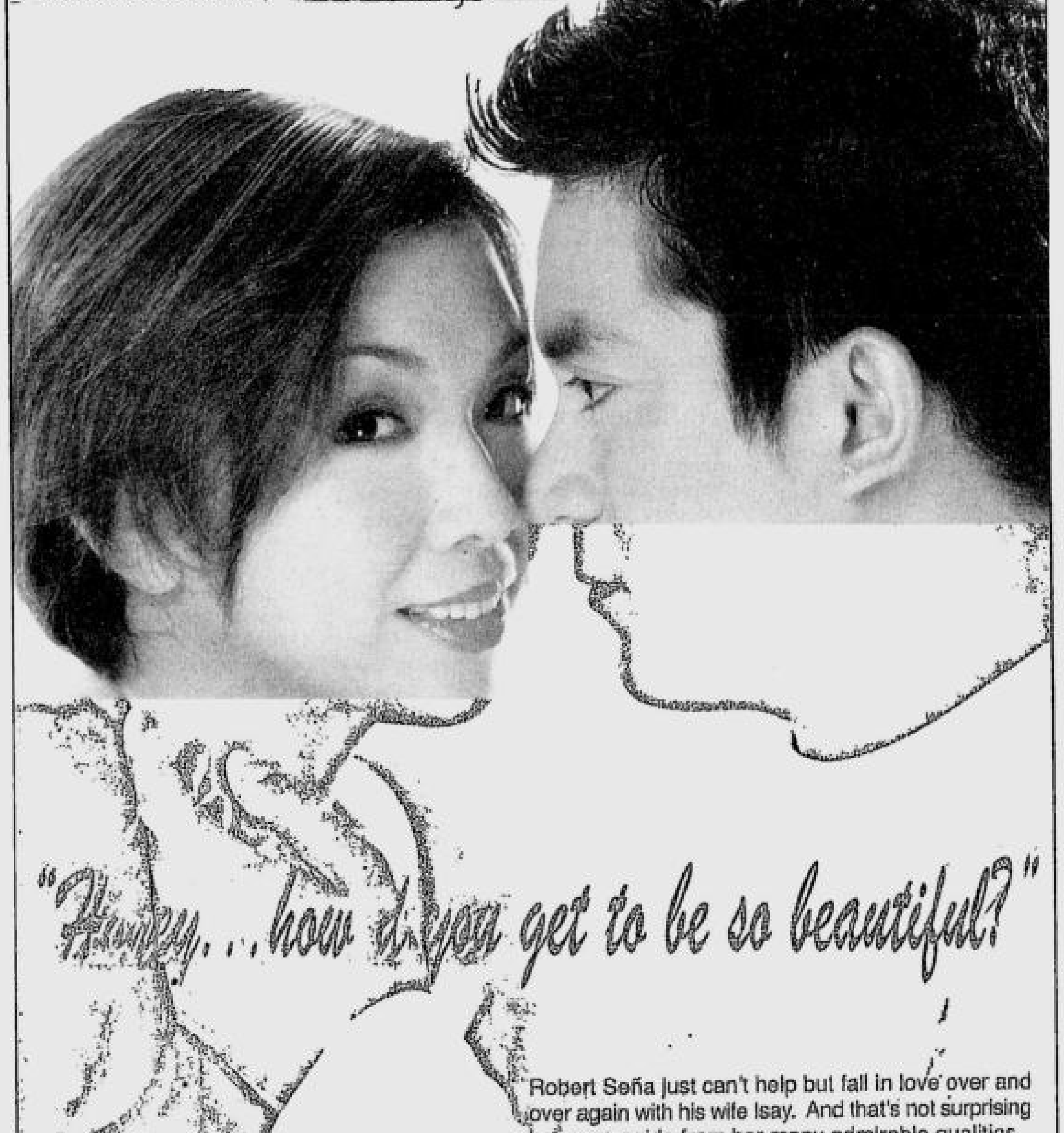

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Fraport tells RP: Fix Naia 3 row now, or we sue

From page A1

ject soured from financial problems of its partners and flagging support from the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo. The original contract was signed during the Estrada administration.

Fraport has offered to sell its stake to the government for $400 million, but the government cancelled all contracts for the terminal last November because of "onerous changes" in the original contract. Last Dec. 10, the Supreme Court ordered the administration and Piatco to seek arbitration or mediation to settle the Naia 3 controversy as stipulated under the Piatco contracts.

Under the Piatco contract, disputes should be resolved by the International Chamber of Commerce, which serves as an arbiter of international business disputes. The World Bank arbitration option is made possible by an agreement between Germany and the Philippines regarding the protection of investments, according to Bender.

ROGER MARGALLO/PDI FILE PHOTO

TURBULENCE continues to unsettle the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3.

Books

Talks with the government have dragged and Fraport is now under pressure to solve the issue within the next four weeks before it closes its books on 2002.

"We plan an arbitration process against the government unless—in the next few days rather than weeks—something significant in the direction of an economically satisfactory solution occurs," Bender said. If it came to arbitration, a decision in Fraport's favor by the World Bank in Washington would show the world that the Philippines was not a secure place to invest, he said.

"Not just German industry is watching how this ends—the whole financial world is looking at the Philippines," he said.

He said this was the Asian nation's biggest foreign investment.

But Bender said Fraport still preferred not to have to go to arbitration, and would continue its talks with the Philippines.

Asked about Fraport's plan to seek World Bank arbitration, the Department of Transportation and Communication (DOTC) said it would take its time in seeking a "win-win solution" to the problem.

DOTC spokesperson Thompson Lantion said yesterday that Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza was still regularly meeting with the new terminal's stakeholders, including Fraport and employees of the Manila International Airport Authority, to work out appropriate solutions.

Informal talks

Lantion said it was impossible to set a timetable for the "informal" talks with the Naia 3 stakeholders as there were a lot of issues that needed to be discussed. He noted that a case was still pending before the Supreme Court.

"Suffice it to say that Secretary Mendoza is making strides by talking to all groups involved, short of arbitration," he said.

In an earlier interview, Moises Tolentino Jr., Piatco vice president for public affairs, said the consortium was engaged in "informal talks" with the government to iron out some issues.

But the Office of the Solicitor General said no panel had been authorized by the OSG to conduct the "non-binding discussions."

"Since the Piatco contracts are void, arbitration, as stipulated in those agreements, is not possible," Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo said in a letter to lawyer Jose Bernas.

Write off

Bender said Fraport was sticking by its 2002 forecast for earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization of more than 500 million euros—excluding any potential impact from Manila.

He declined to comment on how the result would be affected if the group decided to write off its Manila investment, but said he would fight to get compensation if that occurred. "Even if it resulted in the necessity for a write-off, we will fight for every cent in the Philippines."

Fraport Chief Financial Officer Johannes Endler said in September the group would write off the investment if a solution had not been found by the end of the year. *Reuters and Abigail L. Ho*

Kintanar...

From page A1

Kintanar's family cannot find his wallet containing, among other things, credit cards and at least $500 in cash; a Rolex wristwatch said to be worth P380,000; and three guns (a .40 cal. pistol, an HK machine pistol and a Glock 9mm), a police official privy to the investigation said yesterday.

The official said a golf set had also been removed from Kintanar's Toyota Land Cruiser, which was brought to the Central Police District headquarters right after he was shot dead Jan. 23 at a restaurant in Quezon City.

According to the official, Kintanar's assailants could not have stolen the valuables because a number of witnesses saw them leaving the Kamameshi Restaurant at the Quezon Memorial Circle immediately after the shooting.

He said the valuables went missing only when policemen arrived and started gathering evidence from the restaurant and Kintanar's vehicle.

"This is bad," the official told the INQUIRER. "They have no business taking the man's valuables. They're not evidence, in the first place. They should have been immediately returned to the Kintanar family."

The official also said the widow, Joy Asuncion-Kintanar, had been asking CPD authorities about her husband's belongings but that only his mobile phone, bracelet and necklace had been returned.

Neda chief sees prices going up due to Mideast crisis

From page A1

Secretary Romulo Neri said yesterday.

The year-on-year inflation rate last month was slightly higher than the 2.6-percent increase in December but was lower than the 3.8-percent rise in January, 2002.

It was within the 2.6-2.8 percent forecast by the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) but lower than the 2.8-3.2-percent projection of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas for January. For this year, the government is targeting an average inflation rate of 4.5 percent to 5.5 percent.

Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the January rate gave the bank more flexibility on monetary policy.

"It is good news for us because inflation is a principal concern we've always had," he said.

Bangko Sentral has kept its borrowing rate at 7 percent, the lowest in 10 years, and its lending rate at 9.25 percent since March.

The annual inflation rate in Metro Manila rose 0.3 percentage point to 3.2 percent in January from 2.9 percent in December, but inflation outside the metropolis slowed down to 2.4 percent from 2.6 percent.

Month-on-month inflation increased to 0.5 percent from 0.4 percent in December due to higher prices of liquefied petroleum gas and kerosene, higher purchased power adjustment (PPA) and currency exchange rate adjustment for electricity in Metro Manila, and higher basic water rates in the metropolis and some provinces.

Fuel prices rose 8.3 percent in January as the average retail prices of oil products rose to P16.48/liter from P13.73/liter in the same month last year. This followed the jump in Dubai crude oil prices to $28.02/barrel from $18.48/barrel, according to Neri.

At the same time, the peso depreciated from P51.41 to P53.564 against the US dollar.

Water rates

Water rates rose 11.6 percent following the upward adjustment in the basic rates charged by concessionaire Manila Water Co. to P14.42/cubic meter from P9.97/cubic meter.

The National Statistics Office reported that the year-on-year inflation rate for food remained at 1.6 percent in January as higher rate for fish, fruits and vegetables were offset by the slowdown in the rates for corn, eggs, meat. The rates for rice and dairy products were unchanged.

The price of *galunggong* (round scad) rose to P85/kilogram from P75/kg a year ago while the prices of *bangus* (milk fish) and *tilapia* were stable, according to Neri.

The economic planning chief noted that while prices of rice from the National Food Authority and of premium and fancy rice were stable last month, those of special rice rose 10 percent from a year ago.

Based on commodity groups, the annual inflation rate for food, beverage, tobacco and miscellaneous items stabilized at 1.6 percent, the same level in December while the inflation rate for fuel, light and water remained at 2.6 percent.

The year-on-year inflation rate for services rose to 6.3 percent from 5.5 percent in December while the inflation rate for clothing softened to 2.2 percent from 2.4 percent. The rate for housing and repairs dropped to 2.9 percent from 3.6 percent.

Neri said policies to keep food prices stable throughout the year amid the recurrence of the El Niño dry spell would be crucial in managing inflation within the official forecast, given the impending increase in prices of non-food items.

"There's nothing much we can do about this because it's brought about by cost-push pressures, not by demand-pull pressures," he said.

Domestic interest rates have likewise started to accelerate. The benchmark 91-day Treasury bill rate rose 42.4 basis points to 5.6 percent on Monday, while the national government had to reject all bids during the auction of two-year Treasury bonds on Tuesday because bidders demanded high yields. *With a report from Reuters*

Inflation 101

Inflation. It is a general increase in prices across the whole economy. It is distinct from the rise in the price of a particular good or service as it occurs when most prices of goods and services are rising by some degree.

If for example, the price of one product, say cell phones, increases because demand for it is high, we do not call this inflation. The rate of inflation in a particular month will depend on movements in all prices.

Inflation rate. The inflation rate is a measure of the average change in prices across the economy over a specified period, most commonly 12 months or the annual rate of inflation. The National Statistics Office regularly releases the annual inflation rate for a particular month. If the Philippines' annual rate of inflation last month was 1.0 percent, this means prices overall were just under 1.0 percent higher in January 2003 than they were in Jan 2002. So a typical basket of goods and services costing, say, P101 in Jan 2002 cost just below P102 last month.

Consumer Price Index. Used to compute the inflation rate, the CPI is a measure of change in the average retail prices of goods and services commonly purchased by the public based on the 1994 Family Income and Expenditures Survey.

Market basket. This is a sample of goods and services used to represent all goods and services bought by a particular group of people in a particular area. Currently used to compute for the country's CPI are 74 provincial market baskets and 10 market baskets for 10 selected items.

In Metro Manila alone, 705 items are included in the basket and they are classified into six commodity groups. Included in Food, Beverages and Tobacco (FBT) group are rice, dairy products, cereals, fish, vegetables, cooking oil, noodles, etc. Rental rates and construction materials are in Housing and Repairs. The other commodity groups are Fuel, Light and Water; Clothing; Services; and Miscellaneous.

Computation of the CPI. The goods and services in the CPI are chosen and weighted on the basis of the spending patterns of households—for example, if gas bills account for around one percent of consumers' total spending, then gas prices will account for about one percent of the total CPI.

In the Philippines, the FBT has the biggest weight at 55.12, followed by housing and repairs at 14.69 and services at 12.28. The weight assigned to fuel, light and water is only 5.74 while clothing has the smallest weight at 3.66.

Methods used. Price quotations are collected simultaneously in all provincial capitals or cities and in about 600 municipalities nationwide. These outlets are chosen based on their popularity, consistency or completeness of stock, accessibility and permanency.

In Metro Manila, prices of food items are collected weekly while non-food items are collected twice a month except for price quotations for service charges like medical, dental, personal and recreational which are collected twice a year (in January and July). Tuition fees are also gathered twice a year, at the beginning of each school year.

Purchasing power of the peso. Associated with inflation is the purchasing power of the peso. It indicates the real value of the peso in a given period in relation to its value in the base period, usually a year that serves as a reference period. It is computed by dividing the number one by the CPI (for all items) and multiplying the quotient by 100.

The reference or base year used in recent NSO reports is 1994. And one peso in 1994 is now worth only 59-centavos. *Maricar Tolosa, PDI Research*

Pinoy ...

From page A1

highest rate among countries in Southeast Asia—were "romantically expressive" with their mobile phones.

This, it says, is the reason the number of "text messages" sent each day spikes during Valentine's Day.

Closely linked to this is a survey item that said 40 percent of Filipinos' hearts beat faster every time they would hear a text beep.

Data from Globe Telecom Inc. and Smart Communications Inc.—the country's No. 1 and No. 2 wireless service providers—show that short messaging traffic is heaviest during Valentine's Day.

Other peak periods for text messages are Christmas, New Year's Day and Mother's Day.

The "Siemens Mobile Lifestyle Survey" was conducted by research firm Asia Market Intelligence, which made 1,400 interviews from Indonesia, India, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

In the survey, the Philippines topped the "Most Expressive in Love" category, with its 58 percent, followed by Indonesia, where 41 percent of the respondents admitted to saying, "I love you" through short messaging service or "text messaging."

Trailing the Philippines and Indonesia are Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and India.

While Filipinos and Indonesians top the list of most romantically expressive "texters," they are also the ones who prefer breaking up with their partners using their mobile phones.

Around 18 percent of Indonesians and 15 percent of Filipinos said they had broken up with their partners using the more impersonal and less confrontational way of sending a text message.

With the huge number of text messages sent each day, it is not uncommon for some love messages to get lost in transit and end up in the wrong hands.

One out of three Filipinos, or 33 percent, have sent intimate text messages to the wrong number. This number is followed closely by Singaporeans at 28 percent and Malaysians, 23 percent.

Generating more than the usual 150 million messages on Valentine's Day, however, is something that Filipinos may have to worry about soon.

As the volume of text messages sent daily through Globe's and Smart's networks continues to be at very healthy levels, the preference for books among Filipinos aged 15 to 29 seem to be dwindling.

The Siemens survey revealed that 49 percent of 15- to 19-year-olds and 44 percent of 20- to 29-year-olds were more inclined to send text messages than read books.

Vitamin A 'cousin' may treat lung cancer

From page A1

occurs in former smokers. Lung cancer is by far the biggest cancer killer in the United States and the world, expected to kill 157,000 Americans this year.

Vitamin A

Researchers have been studying antioxidants, compounds that prevent and in some cases reverse genetic damage, as a possible route to preventing or treating a range of cancers. Some of the most common antioxidants are vitamins such as vitamin A.

Studies have not shown taking megadoses of these vitamins can help smokers—and one study showed it may hurt.

Taking vitamins at home is probably no solution, either, Kurie said. "You have to take too high a dose and have to be under a doctor's supervision for that."

So Kurie's team tried a cousin of vitamin A known as 9-cis-retinoic acid.

Writing in the Feb. 5 issue of the Journal of the National Cancer Institute, Kurie and his colleagues said the compound seemed to fix some of the DNA damage seen in former smokers. They focused on the RAR-beta gene.

They studied 226 patients who had stopped smoking for at least a year. One-third of them were given 9-cis-retinoic acid, one-third got a related compound called 13-cis-retinoic acid, which has shown promise against other cancers, and a third group got a placebo or dummy pill.

Tissue samples taken from their lungs showed clear damage in many of the patients before treatment. Before treatment, 69 percent of the patients had good, working versions of the RAR-beta gene. Afterward, the only real change was seen in those who got 9-cis-retinoic acid—76 percent of them had working versions of the gene.

Safer compound

Kurie said his team planned to test related compounds that may be safer.

"We are starting to talk to Ligand Pharmaceuticals about Targretin," he said. This drug has a similar mechanism and has shown promise in a range of cancers.

"It is probably better tolerated than 9-cis-retinoic acid," Kurie said.

His team is also testing Celebrex, a second-generation version of drugs such as ibuprofen and aspirin.

Marketed by Pfizer and Pharmacia, Celebrex, and possibly related drugs, may prevent the development of cancer by stopping tumors from growing blood vessels to feed themselves. *Reuters*

Flavier as Lakas presidential bet: 'Is he joking?'

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

SEN. Juan Flavier as Lakas standard bearer is not being taken seriously by some of his partymates.

"Is he joking?" Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri (Bukidnon, Lakas) asked of reports that Flavier is the Lakas darkhorse following the President's announcement that she would not stand election in 2004.

Zubiri said he would oppose Flavier if he was offered as the party candidate.

"Every time he speaks, all that we hear from him are jokes. The presidency is not a joke," Zubiri said in a phone interview.

Rep. Jacinto Paras (Negros Oriental, Lakas) also warned that the 63-member Nationalist People's Coalition might dissolve its coalition with Lakas if Flavier or Sen. Loren Legarda would be chosen as presidential candidate.

"The NPC might support somebody else, maybe (Sen. Panfilo) Ping (Lacson)," Paras said, adding that the "commitment" of NPC chair emeritus Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco was only to support President Macapagal-Arroyo for 2004.

Rep. Prospero Nograles (Davao City, Lakas) said Flavier was more acceptable as a vice presidential candidate, along with Legarda.

"Senator Flavier is our friend but when it comes to winnability, he has more chances as vice president," Nograles said.

And after reports about Flavier being groomed by some partymates as the candidate, Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. yesterday called a caucus of members of the dominant Lakas where they agreed not to endorse anyone just yet.

"The Speaker asked us not to make proclamations yet because we might start factioning out," Zubiri said, adding that the Lakas members supported the Speaker's call.

But the party appears already fractious, with its members rooting for former education secretary Raul Roco, Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., Cojuangco and even Flavier and Legarda.

Zubiri said the names of Roco, Cojuangco and Flavier were mentioned in the meeting of Lakas congressmen held at the Speaker's Makati residence.

Members of the party are also restless because of the uncertainty on who its candidate would be, Paras said.

"We are really restless because despite the President's appeal (against politicking), we continue to talk about our respective candidates," Paras said, adding that this has placed the party at a disadvantage.

Paras noted that former President Fidel Ramos somehow caused the defeat of De Venecia when he ran for President in 1998 because he (Ramos) took too long to anoint a candidate.

"The situation of Lakas is we are on hold, on call waiting, because our boss (Ms Macapagal) has not made up her mind (on who to endorse)," Nograles said.

But Nograles said this disadvantage could be offset by the party machinery and the President's influence.

Paras recently hosted a meeting of 30 House members, mostly Lakas, who agreed to endorse Cojuangco as Lakas candidate.

"The 30 congressmen are still solid and we expect many more to support Danding," Paras said.

But Zubiri said he and a number of congressmen were still pushing for Roco, whose Aksyon Demokratiko remains a member of the pro-administration People Power Coalition.

"First of all, Danding has given his body language that he doesn't want to run and the Chief Justice has not entertained the idea at all. So we are still pushing for Roco," Zubiri said.

GETTING STARTED FOR 2004

Ping for president group launched

By Gerald G. Lacuarta

LEADERS of a coalition of 120 organizations yesterday vowed to deliver the votes to make Sen. Panfilo Lacson the country's next president.

Calling itself the Citizens' Movement for Order (CMO), the coalition launched the get-Lacson-to-Malacañang drive in a colorful and raucous gathering at a Quezon City restaurant, a day after former President Joseph Estrada's Partido ng Masang Pilipino said it was backing Lacson as the presidential bet of a united opposition in 2004.

The coalition claimed it controlled a million votes representing the membership of the organizations, led by the Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan All Filipino Democratic Movement (Kaakbay) and which include groups identified with Estrada.

Listed as co-convenors are the Citizens Movement for Justice, Economy, Environment and Peace (JEEP), Metro Manila Vendors Association (MMVA), Philippine Confederation of Drivers Organizations-Alliance of Concerned Transport Organization (PCDO-ACTO), the Save Ilocos Sur Movement, the Kaunlaran ng mga Barangay Tanod sa Pilipinas, Muslim Young Professionals and Businessmen Association of the Philippines, and the Adamson University Faculty and Employees Union.

LACSON

In a statement, leaders of the organizations said they were "highly motivated by his (Lacson's) outstanding record of achievements, especially those which pertain to instilling discipline among those who are entrusted to serve the public."

Alain del Pascua, Kaakbay national chair and CMO lead convenor, said the groups declared support for Lacson on their own initiative and that not even Lacson knew of the move.

"We did not inform him or talk to him about this. This is the initiative of the organizations," Del Pascua told a news conference.

In a later interview, Lacson himself said he was "overwhelmed" by the show of support of the organizations, but said he had not yet declared a bid for the presidency.

"I still have to wait for the endorsement of my own party, the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino," he said.

Lacson said while the Partido ng Masang Pilipino had announced that it was supporting him in 2004, he still had to undergo the selection process of the LDP.

Lacson said he welcomed the possibility of having Sen. Juan Flavier as running mate.

"We had exploratory talks as early as last year, but lately his name had been floated as a possible presidential candidate of Lakas," Lacson said.

He added he expected more black propaganda to come his way after the endorsement by the groups.

"I have been the subject of demolition jobs in the last two years. Now these attacks may come like a meteor shower," he said.

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Datumanong completes peace panel with MILF

MALACAÑANG has named Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong as peace negotiator with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

Datumanong completes the five-member government panel.

The other members are presidential adviser on the peace process Eduardo Ermita, Irene Santiago, Dr. Emily Marohombsar and presidential assistant Jesus Dureza, who is the panel chair.

In a statement, Ermita said Datumanong would be a "valuable" panel member since he "has gained the respect and trust of the Muslim community" when he was governor and congressman of Maguindanao.

Datumanong was also a member of the government panel during the initial stages of negotiation with the Moro National Liberation Front in the '70s.

The negotiations eventually resulted in the signing of the crucial Tripoli agreement in Libya in 1976, which was the basis for the final peace agreement with the MNLF in 1996.

The Macapagal administration is now pursuing a final political settlement with the MILF after signing last year an agreement to end hostilities.

Dureza said the panel is still crafting its draft of the final peace agreement.

President Macapagal-Arroyo suspended formal talks last year after the military reported clashes with MILF rebels.

Eventually she allowed backchannel talks.

"We look forward to a resumption of the panel-to-panel talks very soon. The government panel will present its proposed peace agreement framework to the MILF to jumpstart the talks on the final settlement," Dureza said in a statement.

The President last month has approved the its final peace agreement offer to the Communist Party of the Philippines-National Democratic Front and its armed wing, the New People's Army.

REMINDER

To the Devotees of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (SHJ): Tomorrow, FIRST FRIDAY, February 7, 2003,

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Sotto seeks review of gun ban; Lacson is all for it, and more

SENATE Minority Leader Vicente Sotto III yesterday filed a resolution calling for an inquiry into the rationale, guidelines and mechanics of the implementation of the total gun ban and the conduct of checkpoints all over the country.

And his partymate, Sen. Panfilo Lacson, said that while he is all for it, the gun ban should be accompanied by efforts by the police to provide a climate of peace in the streets.

Sotto said his resolution sought to determine policy coherence, and ensure the safety of law-abiding citizens.

"Recent incidents have proven... that law enforcement elements and agencies lacked proper intelligence and training in pursuing suspected criminals," Sotto explained.

He cited the recent shooting of innocent resort workers in Cebu City by National Bureau of Investigation agents.

He also said, referring to the checkpoints, that the Department of Tourism's campaign to project peace and order would be jeopardized by "a contrary policy" that would give the impression that we were "in a police state" or "under martial law."

Sen. Panfilo Lacson was likewise concerned about the implementation of President Macapagal-Arroyo's gun control policy, saying the Philippine National Police should conduct a parallel campaign to improve the peace and order climate.

"(Gun control) will turn out to be untimely if government cannot impress upon the public that they are safe in the streets," Lacson said yesterday.

He noted that top police officials were surprised when Ms Macapagal first announced the gun ban policy during the PNP's 12th founding anniversary last week.

As a result, the PNP had to rush the drafting of implementing rules and regulations, Lacson said.

When he was PNP chief, he said, he effectively regulated the issuance of licenses and Permits to Carry Firearms Outside of Residence (PTCFORs) through strict enforcement of required tests and seminars.

But Lacson made it clear that he supported the President's granting of amnesty for loose firearms, saying this was "an effective tool to check gun-related crimes." *Cynthia D. Balana*

Palace studies GSIS bid to hike premium

MALACAÑANG yesterday said it would "reconsider" the request of the Government Service Insurance System to raise the monthly contributions of its 1.4 million members as a "last resort" to meet its budget shortfall.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye was reacting to the GSIS' report before the House committee on civil service on Tuesday that it could no longer lend P58 million monthly to the state-run Employees Compensation Commission (ECC).

Senior corporate officer Enriqueta Disuangco was quoted as saying that such lending depletes GSIS funds.

The Social Security System, which gets mandatory contributions from private employees, also wants to increase its monthly premiums.

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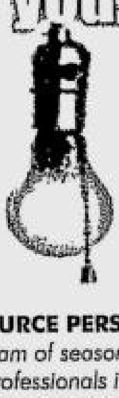

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INQUIRER

Vol. 18 No. 60
ISSN
0116-2642

Publisher **ISAGANI YAMBOT**
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OPINION

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THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 520-0183 / 520-0186 and 520-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.

Superpower everywhere

EDITORIAL

THE CRASH of the US space shuttle Columbia as it reentered Earth last weekend was described by Sean O'Keefe, Nasa administrator, as an "accident of epic proportions" suffered by the American space program. The crash killed seven astronauts, including Kalpana Chawla, the first Indian-born woman in space, and Air Force Col. Ilan Ramon, Israel's first astronaut. It was the most devastating space shuttle disaster since Jan. 28, 1986, when Challenger exploded 73 seconds after launch, killing all seven astronauts abroad.

The explosion of Columbia in Texas adds another chapter to the mixed record of space exploration—characterized both by triumphs and disasters—carried out by the leading rivals in the race to explore outer space, the United States and the former Soviet Union, since 1967. On April 27, 1967, for example, three US astronauts died when a fire broke out in their command module during a ground test at Kennedy Space Center. On April 24, 1967 a Soviet cosmonaut was killed when Soyuz I crashed on its return to Earth. On June 29, 1971, three Soviet cosmonauts died during reentry of their Soyuz spacecraft.

Following the end of the Cold War, the former Soviet Union has lost incentive in competing with the United States for supremacy in space programs. The Columbia crash now casts doubts on whether the United States will continue to fund space programs with the same zeal. The Challenger crash has set back the shuttle program for three years.

The Columbia explosion not only brings back to the United States still vivid memories of national grief following the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, on the World Trade Center, it also delivered a psychological blow to the United States as it steps up preparations for its war against Iraq. It was an accident that happened at a most inappropriate time for the United States.

The reaction to the accident in the Middle East was, as an executive of a multinational oil company put it, to consider it as "divine retribution against America for its ongoing preparation for war against Iraq." Those in the Arab world with superstitious bent shared this observation. The death of the Israeli astronaut was taken as an omen with religious significance.

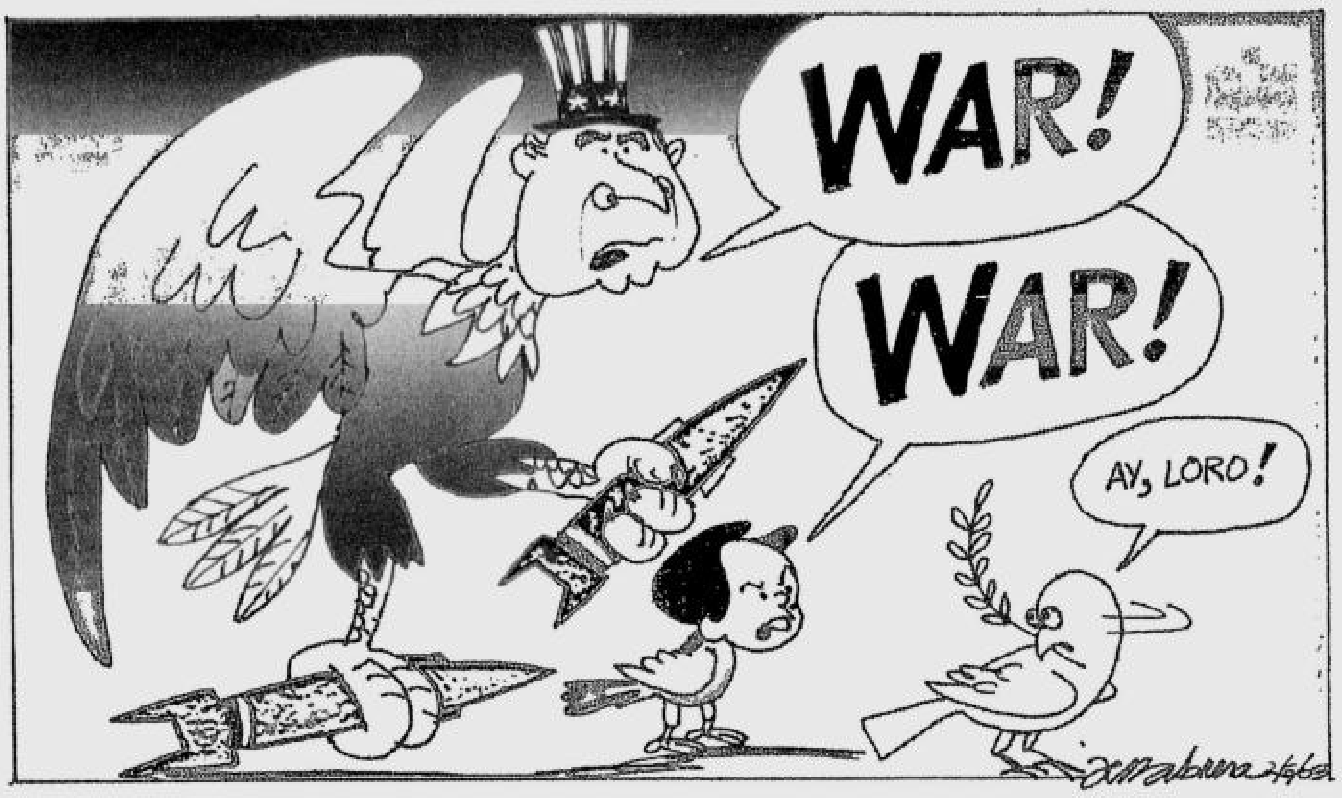
However, US President George W. Bush was quick to assert that the disaster would not slow down or alter the United States' plans to present to the UN Security Council evidence indicating that Iraq had breached the UN resolution demanding that it disarm. The House spokesman said, "The president does not see it (the crash) as connected to other events around the world."

Expectations by some people in the Islamic community that the United States would blame terrorists for the disaster were quickly doused by the statement issued by the National Security Council saying there was no evidence that the destruction of Columbia was the work of terrorists.

While the United States is investigating the causes of the disaster, the Bush administration has put up a bold front by giving the assurance that the president remained committed to the space program. The presidential spokesman said, "From the president's point of view, the mission of science and the marvelous space exploration will go on." Whether or not the administration will pump more funds into the space program is constrained by the increase of the defense budget and the staggering cost of war if the United States decides to attack Iraq.

The United States is confronted today with many threats that require a huge defense budget virtually placing it on a war footing. Aside from the military build-up for the war with Iraq, the United States is challenged by the nuclear program of North Korea which has taken advantage of the United States' obsessions with Iraq to build up its own nuclear arsenal.

As the sole superpower after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States faces demands on its resources to live up to its self-appointed role as the guardian of democracy—albeit determined unilaterally by the United States—and as an international peacekeeper. These demands stem from the military situation in Iraq and North Korea, which requires global US military deployment. At the same time, its space program requires the continued commitment of huge resources. The crash of Columbia seems to show that the United States cannot be superpower both here on earth and in outer space. Something has to give.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GSIS cites reasons for fund mess

(Continued from yesterday)

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THIS is a continuation of the Government Service Insurance System's justifications (translation: excuses) for its P25-billion deficit and the financial mess that the Commission on Audit found. In the interest of fair play, I am giving the GSIS equal space to defend itself.

• On the deficiency reported by the COA in the actuarial reserve requirement: The actuarial reserve requirement is a theoretical figure which refers to the amount to be set up to answer for future liabilities of the System in terms of claims and benefits. The actuarial reserve requirement should be backed up by assets which, when liquidated, should be able to cover the liabilities. The theoretical actuarial deficit would not be reflected in the COA report, the GSIS said, had the following been credited to the computation of reserves:

1. The collectibles from the Department of Budget and Management amounting to more than P13 billion in premium arrearages, including interest and surcharges.

2. The current market value of acquired assets and big-ticket investments which at present are booked at acquisition cost instead of current market value. When brought up to their current market levels, the assets could increase by P15 billion, because the GSIS is required under the Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 10 par. 14 to provide allowance for market decline. Thus, we (the GSIS) have to book market decline losses of more than P10 billion for stocks that have yet to be sold. While these are paper losses which can go up in value as stocks pick up, we have no other option but to follow the rules.

3. Auditor Dimagiba gave a "clean" opinion on the GSIS balance sheet and income statement for the year 2001. She however said that if actuarial deficit remained uncorrected, it may affect the ability of the System to meet its future obligations. That is, if the GSIS will not exert efforts to bridge the gap between the required reserves and the actual reserves.

However, the GSIS is addressing the concern by carrying out programs to optimize returns on its investments and assets. These programs include the following: (a) aggressive collection efforts to increase investible funds; (b) aggressive acquired asset disposition program; (c) expanded loan windows; (d) aggressive marketing of optional life and non-life insurance products; (e) hiring of external fund managers to manage a portion of the investible funds and to tap other markets.

• On the past due business loans, while it may be true that there are several business loans which are past due, it is not true that the "collectibility" of such is doubtful because all the loans are fully secured and amply collateralized. Thus, after exhausting all means to collect, the GSIS has been resorting to remedial management such as restructuring and foreclosure.

• On the arrears of members in premiums that "in most cases, are more than the cash surrender value of their policies": Although there are indeed cases such as these, the GSIS has adopted measures to correct the situation: aggressive collection efforts for all loan and premium payments and arrearages; a cross-default policy that will deter borrowers from incurring other arrearages in premiums and loan payments and encourage them to pay for such to enjoy their loan privileges.

• On the stopping of payment to employee compensation claimants and pensioners: The GSIS continues to receive and process EC claims. However, payments are subject to availability of funds coming from actual collections without interfund borrowings. Unpaid contributions reached a total of P926 million as of December 2001. The EC fund is suffering heavy losses due to claims which are bigger than the contributions received. In order to pay all EC claims in spite of the continued losses and negative surplus of the EC Fund, the GSIS has resorted to borrowings from its other funds such as the Optional Life Insurance Fund (OLIF) and General Insurance Fund (GIF). As of Dec. 31, 2001, the amount advanced by the GSIS to the EC Fund has gone up to P2.4 billion, excluding interest of P822 million. The total indebtedness of the EC Fund now totals P3.2 billion.

Under the law, public servants and their dependents are entitled to receive benefits from the government in the event of work-connected illness, disability or death. The government, as the employer of public servants, is mandated to allocate in its budget a monthly contribution of P30 for every employee and remit it to the GSIS. The employees are not required to pay single centavo for this purpose. The contributions go to the EC Fund where the GSIS draws money to pay pensions, medical, death and disability benefits.

The GSIS is not the policymaking body of the EC Fund. It is the Employees' Compensation Commission (ECC) which has the power to fix the rate of contributions and the responsibility to ascertain the actuarial stability of the EC Fund. The GSIS only implements the policies of the ECC.

The DBM owes the GSIS a total of P568 million (interest excluded) in unpaid EC premiums. Contribution collectibles from various government agencies amount to P358 million. Total collectibles as of Dec. 31, 2001: P926 million.

Having exhausted all remedies to no avail, and in order to prevent further burden on the actuarial solvency of its two other funds where the EC is heavily indebted, the GSIS will stop interfund borrowing immediately.

Like how?

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THE REPORTS say the Filipinos in Kuwait came out in droves to greet President Macapagal-Arroyo, many of them craning their necks to catch a glimpse of her. They say the crowds applauded her loudly wherever she went and found her assurances that she would do everything to keep the 1.5 million Filipinos out of harm's way something to be grateful for.

I can believe it. I saw several footage of it on TV, and truly the crowds were huge and enthusiastic, though some of the faces there looked more pensive. The sighs of relief of several interviewees were heartfelt. That the President should come out personally to give them those assurances was a source of grace for them.

GMA herself had a strong message to give. The government, she said, had drawn up a plan for the OFWs in the Middle East in the event of a war on Iraq. "The plan aims that no single OFW will get hurt, that none will get dislocated from employment, that we keep our friendly ties with Kuwait and other host governments and that we sustain and enhance the image of our country as a preferred source of professional quality workers."

Well, I myself applaud the President for having gone to the Middle East to meet with the OFWs. What is that ad that says you cannot fax a handshake? What's true for business deals is even truer for dealing with the citizens. You cannot fax an assurance, you cannot e-mail a helping hand, you cannot text comfort in an hour of grief, or anxiety. There is a difference between sending a message of hope to the OFWs to be read by envoys, and being there to deliver it yourself. GMA did well to choose the latter.

But that's about all the good you can say about it. GMA's message itself gives out a false hope, and should prove exceptionally cruel if war should break out in Iraq. How can she guarantee that no Filipino will not get hurt in that war or lose his job by it? How can anyone, including the heads of the most powerful governments, guarantee that? That is a breathtaking exercise in wish fulfillment, if not a deliberate attempt at deception. If war breaks out in Iraq, then heaven help all of us, not just the OFWs in the Middle East.

At the very least, if GMA cannot draw up a contingency plan to assure that no Filipino will get raped, maimed, robbed, waylaid, mugged, knifed, shot and bombed in his own country, how can she draw up one that will assure that will not happen in another country? One she has no control over, one that has an entirely different set of laws and culture, one where Filipinos are the least of the host government's priorities. Indeed, one whose citizens are Arabs and Muslims, the very people the government has been known to scorn with its foreign policy and treat like dirt bags with its national one. It boggles the mind to see how it can be done.

Quite apart from that, how can you stop Filipinos from being killed by a conflagration that threatens to engulf the entire Middle East? To begin with, there are Filipinos in Iraq. How will you prevent them from not meeting the fury of George Bush's smart bombs? By wearing a sign that says "I am a Filipino, I am not the enemy"?

Not quite incidentally, it is very revealing that GMA chose Kuwait and not Saudi Arabia or the United Arab Emirates or any other Arab country to deliver her message. That itself is a message, Kuwait being pro-American for having been the beneficiary of American intervention in Saddam Hussein's invasion a decade ago, which sparked the Gulf War. And the other countries, chief of them Saudi Arabia, which supported the United States in the Gulf War, now being staunch protesters of Bush's brewing war against Iraq. What GMA's visit to Kuwait is saying is that she remains committed to Bush and his folly.

That is what refutes her assurances through and through. That does not put Filipino OFWs in the Middle East out of harm's way, that puts them directly and squarely in it. Doubly so in the light of GMA's acceptance of Bush's invitation to visit the Oval Office, an ego trip fraught with horrendous consequences.

There is only one assurance that no Filipino will get hurt or lose his job in the Middle East over the coming months. That is by stopping the war.

GMA said in her speech in Kuwait that she was there on a mission of hope and peace, but if war should break out, her government was prepared for it. Well, unlike lightning, war does not visit us from out of the blue. It is not an act of God, it is an act of man. It can be prevented. It can be defeated. It can be stopped dead in its tracks.

The only way GMA can assure that no Filipino will get hurt or lose his job in the Middle East is by adding her voice to the chorus of voices from all over the world bidding the madness stop. The only way she can do it is by proclaiming, as France, Germany, Russia, China, the various Asian, African and Latin American countries, have done, to say that her government and nation will have no part in this obscenity, in the slaughter of a people for an unhinged American president's peace of mind.

The only way GMA can assure that no Filipino will get hurt or lose his job in the Middle East is not by hoping against hope that war will not break out in Iraq but by willing against will to help stop that war from breaking out. The only way she can do it is by thundering forth that her government, which has backed the US-led war against terror over the past year, will not back this war because it does not fight terror but unleashes it. The only way she can do it is by saying that George Bush may blandish and threaten, but he will find no aid or comfort from this nation and people to fight a war that finds no favor in the eyes of God or man.

Otherwise, that visit is just a junket and those assurances a lot of breaking wind.

* * *

Comments to dequiros@vasia.com

Shame

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

LAST Monday evening, Feb. 3, the supporters of Comelec Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco, who faced an impeachment resolution in the House, sensed that they had the numbers to reject the committee report junking the impeachment resolution. Thus, they decided to force the voting even if the agreement with the anti-Tancangco forces, and witnessed by Speaker Jose de Venecia, was to hold it the next day. In fact, scheduled that Monday was the Anti-Money Laundering Agreement (Amla) sponsored by Manila's Jaime Lopez, and resource personnel from the banks and financing sectors were already waiting at the back of the plenary hall. When the pro-Tancangco group realized that many anti lawmakers were not around, they called for a vote despite efforts of the antis to prolong the interpellation of Bacolod Rep. Monico Puentebella, the resolution's principal sponsor. Puentebella later decried that he was made to believe that after his speech, the Amla, which was also being rushed, would be taken up. The pro-Tancangco forces were simply too cunning for the antis.

* * *

Many of the 93 lawmakers who were absent thought the voting was to be held the next day yet. But the pro-Tancangco lawmakers, assured of a quorum, pressed for the voting, which yielded 69 in support of the committee report and 57 against it. The 57 antis needed 17 more votes to send the report back to the justice committee for investigation. This would have been the right thing to do, considering the gravity of the charges and the overwhelming evidence of culpability culled from COA reports and Comelec records (furnished by insiders fed up with her machinations), and the Supreme Court decision voiding her P6.5-billion voter's registration contract with Photokina because it was five times more than the P1.2 billion allocated by Congress.

* * *

Earlier, Surigao Rep. Prospero Pichay told this columnist with his customary swagger, that the anti-Tancangco group would be lucky to muster 30 votes. But as the night wore on and the representatives stood up to explain their votes, Pichay and his cohorts, such as Negros' Jacinto Paras and Rolex Suplico, realized that there were actually many more who were for impeachment but did not come out earlier for fear of intimidation from the Comelec and the Iglesia ni Cristo. It was evident from the clamor for an investigation of the complaint that a bandwagon effect was being created among the silent majority. Had the voting been held last Tuesday as earlier announced, the requisite 73 votes would have been met. The rallying cry was "Let the truth set us all free."

* * *

After the voting there was a clamor from pro-impeachment lawmakers, such as Eduardo Nachura, Florencio Abad, Arthur Defensor and Antonino Roman, that those who failed to vote last Monday be allowed to do so, so that the true sentiment of the chamber could be determined. Roman argued correctly that it was clear from the fact that no one abstained in Monday's voting that everyone wanted to be heard on this crucial issue, which was only the third impeachment case considered by the House since it reopened in 1987. The anti lawmakers appealed to their colleagues that Monday's session be suspended instead of adjourned until the next day to allow the 93 others to vote. Pressured on this issue, acting Speaker Raul Gonzalez, who himself voted against the report, called for a division of the House. As many voices shouted aye as well as nay, he said, "I am confused." The next step was to call for nominal voting, in which the votes of two-thirds were needed to allow suspension of the session. The roll call failed to produce a quorum after Tancangco ally, Ronaldo Zamora, led a pack out of the hall.

* * *

Reports indicate that some anti-Tancangco lawmakers are looking into the possibility of asking the Supreme Court for a clarification on the impeachment rules. This is a good idea since many citizens were simply horrified by the way Tancangco's supporters crafted a committee report that was so flawed and rammed it through a voting last Monday night, violating an earlier gentleman's agreement for the voting to be held on Tuesday. Rep. Butch Abad was quoted as saying that the voting "would now only make it even harder for the House to impeach officials."

* * *

Interestingly, every single one of the 57 lawmakers who voted to impeach Tancangco took pains to explain his or her vote to the entire nation. Their near-unanimous lamentation was that their other colleagues played blind to a case that "any reasonable mind" would find highly impeachable. Cebu City Rep. Antonio Cuenco even turned lyrical in his little speech, arguing that "the sufficiency in substance of the impeachment complaint is so clear, so obvious, and so manifest that to say otherwise is like saying there are no stars in the sky." To disregard its substance, thundered Cuenco, "is to violate my oath of office as a lawyer and a member of the House." Another anti, Ilocos Sur Rep. Salacnib Baterina, got so carried away delivering a fiery speech about looking for men who do not lie that he forgot to say what his vote was, and the Deputy Speaker had to ask him.

By contrast, the 69 pro-Tancangco group, except for perhaps 10, chose to merely signal the secretariat or sent their written vote. Two of them (alas, my fellow UP alumni Gerry Espina and Constantino Jaraula) tried to seek refuge behind legalese. At least Lanao Rep. Benasing Macarambon, was honest about his vote: he admitted that he owed Tancangco a lot. A radio commentator noted this difference between the two factions and quipped, *"Mukhang maraming napipipi sa loob."* No doubt the friends of Tancangco were ashamed of their vote. And rightly so, for last Monday was a black day for the House.

Out of our comfort zone

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

IT took Mario Taguiwalo, our own (self)proclaimed candidate for president, to mine this nugget from the voluminous transcripts of "Philippine Forum" gatherings in the last three years.

As you may know, "alumni" of the forum met last weekend for one and a half days of talk and planning, dissecting the problems of the country and proposing solutions to them. Guiding us were the proceedings of other meetings, perhaps just to make sure we weren't treading over well-tramped ground, or simply moving in circles.

Anyway, Mario warned us against limiting our visions to our own circle of experience and peers, presuming our necessarily narrow points of view were shared by, or applied to, the rest of the Filipino people. To buttress his point, Mario asked us to revisit the intervention of Allan Bernardo during the closing plenary of the first Philippine Forum last January 2000. This is what Bernardo said:

"…most of us here form our opinions and ideas based on our relatively narrow experiences and the experiences of the people in our immediate social circles… I think most of us are not as analytical or critical of the opinions and ideas that are based from our experiences. Yet we are developing plans and making decisions for people whose lives and realities are vastly different from our comfortable existence.

"More dangerous than the lack of convergence of ideas is the danger of becoming too confident of our own ideas and failing to be critical of ourselves. We end up with ideas that are superficial, unsubstantial, unsubstantiated or in Filipino '*mababaw.*'"

If the "successor generation" wished to "generate ideas and initiatives that will go beyond clichés, platitudes and recycled ideas," he said, "we will all need to go beyond our personal and immediate world views."

* * *

BERNARDO, an educator, then sought to apply this observation to the way policy, especially in the field of education, seems to be made based on the assumptions and opinions of the elite, since it is the members of the elite who occupy decision-making positions in the establishment, or who are in position to influence policymakers. Foremost of these concerns is the issue of language, brought into focus once more by the President's recent declaration that English should be restored as the medium of instruction in public schools.

To underscore his point, Bernardo asked Joey Ayala to give a 30-second science instruction to the group—in Cebuano. While humorous, the presentation left many of us befuddled. Only those who knew Cebuano, of course, understood that what Joey was talking about was how water comes to a boil. "Substitute English for Cebuano and think about the typical Filipino child who has next to zero position in English. Next time we think about the language issue in education, let us think about this Filipino child who experiences what most of us just experienced, almost every day of his school life in the classroom."

* * *

ALMOST all educational theorists, as well as teachers and administrators, have long recognized that for the first two years of education (the first and second grade) the vernacular is really the ideal medium of instruction. All tests and measurements, it has been pointed out, reveal that children show better comprehension and retention of the basics if they first learn these in the language used at home.

Indeed, an education official points out that what the DepEd follows these days is really a trilingual policy: the vernacular in the first two years, Filipino by third grade, with English used for subjects like math and science.

I have a problem, too, with people who maintain that learning more than one language "confuses" a child or somehow hampers the transfer of information and values. My view is that as long as the languages are taught well and used well, then a child's mind is big enough and flexible enough to accommodate any amount of knowledge.

A "return" to English, I think, would only reinforce the exclusion of so many of our people that Bernardo was talking about, and the further isolation of the few who are unable to live and think outside their comfort zone.

* * *

TUNE in to radio station dzRH at nine this evening for the airing of the radio adaptation of "Dapit Hapon ng Isang Bayani (A Hero's Dusk)," a historical drama based on the life of Chief Justice Jose Abad Santos.

"Dapit Hapon ng Isang Bayani" kicks off the "Festival of Bert Florentino Plays" on Radio Balintataw, in observance of National Arts Month and in commemoration of the Edsa People Power Revolt. Cecile Guidote-Alvarez, producer-host of Radio Balintataw, says the festival is "a salute to one of the country's foremost playwrights who has pioneered in mirroring and confronting the social conditions and problems of our country. Balintataw pays tribute to Bert's 50 years of public service to the country in the field of theatre and television as well as in book publishing."

Apart from the world premiere of "Dapit Hapon ng Isang Bayani," the festival will also feature the Philippine premiere on radio of Florentino's noted plays on social realities: "The World is an Apple," which won for him the Palanca Prize at the age of 23; "Memento Mori," "The Difficulties of the Diplomat," and "Lungsod."

Florentino, who is now based in New York, has written more than a hundred plays for television and 50 for the stage. He served as literary manager of TV Balintataw, which was created and produced by Alvarez, directed for TV by Lupita Aquino-Kashiwahara and hosted by Robert Arevalo. Balintataw has been a consistent award-winner since its debut in 1967.

Art in container vans

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

THEY are the leviathans of the road—these so-called container vans. They have come to symbolize heavily loaded words like globalization. They serve as moving proofs of the state of the economy. They move products and heavy equipment from place to place, from shore to shore. What would trade and industry be without them?

But for many of us who take to the road every day, they are to be avoided. We keep away as much as possible because of their sheer size and weight. When they pass by, that part of the world shakes and rattles. How many people and properties have been destroyed by these lumbering goliaths that go astray or fall on their sides, pinning down hapless pedestrians and structures? This does not happen often but when it does, the havoc is dramatic, messy.

I remember a huge one landing right on the entrance of a Chinese restaurant named Great Wall on UN Avenue near the former INQUIRER office. The Great Wall was no match.

I myself was a victim some years ago when dangerous imported right-side-driven vehicles, mostly heavy ones, were not yet outlawed. My experience was horror in slo-mo. The driver of the right-side-drive giant was trying to maneuver his vehicle in heavy traffic and did not see my motionless car down below on his left. I saw my right window slowly crumble before my eyes. Good thing I had no passenger on that side. The poor pale driver was so scared he readily gave up his license to me.

So what about container vans this time?

Well, some artists are turning them into a venue for consciousness-raising art. Art could thrive in any place, any space, as long as the artistic spirit is alive, daring and willing.

"Densities: Making Sense of Dense Cities" is the theme of "social-conceptual art installations" that will be exhibited at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP). Seven containers (without the vans) will be used to showcase art-for-the-environment in this dense city by three art organizations, Pananaw ng Sining Bayan, Pinaglabanan Galleries and Surrounded by Water Gallery and the artists affiliated with them. "Densities" is being curated by noted visual artist Imelda Cajipe-Endaya. Sid Hildawa is venue director.

The containers, borrowed from shipping companies, are already at the CCP. The artists are starting to install the unconventional art works inside these huge containers. I got a preview the other day of what it would look like.

"Densities" aims to encourage visual artists to pool energies and create innovative and excellent art on themes that arise from real-life problems of cities. It hopes to encourage greater participation of the general public in creating.

The exhibit will feature five sub-themes: power/mobility, shelter, environment, body and community.

The environment theme is tackled by Surrounded by Water Gallery (SBW), Ideas (an NGO working for developmental and environmental concerns) and Cavite Institute which runs a waste management project called Wishcraft (this involves students who turn garbage into money for tuition).

One van will be filled with pillows stuffed with discarded soft plastic. The students will record the stuffing they put into every pillow and the name of the contents will then be either silkscreened or stitched on the pillow. The van will be padded wall to wall with the pillows.

The power theme will be explored by Michael Muñoz along with a group of artists, while the mobility theme will be handled by Datu Arellano and the Firefly Brigade. Street sounds will be featured in the container's interior that will be designed to create a narrowing down feeling. Light boxes will provide glimpses of the urban landscape. There will be live performances inside by a group called Tupada, plus a cacophony of city sounds that commuters experience daily. Hope, yes, hope, will be provided.

The shelter theme is for the Cavite-based art group Anting-anting. Cavite, as we all know, is in the direction of the urban sprawl and rapid industrialization. Fast population growth and need for shelter accompany the phenomenon. How do artists view this? A "bottle-neck city" will be displayed.

And what happens to human bodies? Body is the theme that will portray so-called progress and its opposite. Is progress measured by the height of skyscrapers, the lavish parties, power dressing and fancy restaurants? Where in the equation are the suffocating masses, the lower-income groups that move the industries with their sweat as capital? Artist Ronaldo Ruiz, Tupada and UE students will confront this problem through their art.

And finally, community. Clara Gallardo, Jet Pascua, Claro Ramirez and Eric Zamuco will try to offer hope in a society caught in the urban blight such as energy and water problems, transportation woes—the day-to-day concerns of the ordinary city dweller. The artists call their multimedia piece "Changing Perspectives." This one is an interactive installation for viewers to walk through and weave in and out.

The exhibit/experience is from Feb. 18 to March 18 at the CCP Front Lawn, from 6 a.m. (for morning joggers and promenaders) to 6 p.m., every day except Mondays. Come and see.

* * *

Music for a cause. A solo concert featuring pianist Leonor Kilayko will be held on Sunday, Feb. 9 at 7 p.m. at the L'Fisher Hotel in Bacolod City. This is for the benefit of the Silay Heritage Foundation.

* * *

Send comments to cerespd@info.com.ph

Little things

YOUNG BLOOD

Tina Pastelero

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

GIVEN that there are so many things to hate about the Philippines, it has become almost boring to hear people complain about our poor country's problems. I myself have my own growing list of grievances against our nation, the top one being the lack of attractive job opportunities for recent graduates.

But it's the whining and grumbling about the bigger things—like the bearish economy, the budget deficit, the high unemployment rate—that make people forget about the things that have the potential to really matter, the little things that individual Filipino citizens can actually control.

Just recently, I was riding a car with a (college-educated) friend when he opened the window to throw some garbage out. I was appalled and I told him I would be glad to dispose of his trash for him if he was too lazy to find a suitable receptacle for it. I went on and told him if even he couldn't do something as simple as refraining from littering, how could he expect the common man on the street to do so.

On a different occasion, my mother was driving me home. As we approached an intersection where traffic was heavy, I could sense that she was thinking about making an illegal U-turn at the stoplight. I went into commando mode and remarked that it wouldn't hurt to go a bit further down the road to where one was allowed to make a U-turn since we would be adding a mere five minutes to our travel time.

Of course, these mini-lectures are usually futile exercises in communication, but they got me into thinking about the mistaken belief of so many Filipinos that the things they do and the choices they make every day don't matter. I think this belief stems from a certain sense of hopelessness about the country, a mentality that cries, "This country is so messed up it'll never improve." And this is fueled by the many stories of greener pastures awaiting Filipinos abroad.

It may currently be in vogue for my wealthier contemporaries to go abroad to take up loftier educational pursuits in fashion, cooking and foreign languages, but I have chosen to stay here because I believe that this country can't possibly stay in terrible shape forever. I don't blame Filipinos who decide to make a living in other countries, but I do resent those who put this country down and even have the gall to belittle those of us who choose not to leave. It's also a pain to listen to members of the "elite" who think it's classy to constantly criticize everything Filipino and compare it unfavorably with what they have seen in "Paris, dah-ling," or "New York, my dear *palanggas*!" Those who think so badly of the Philippines should contemplate permanently leaving because their negative attitudes do nothing to make life better for the rest of us.

What have I done for the country lately? Nothing on a grand scale, but I think my decision to stay and work here (althought I am without a job at the moment) is a good start. There's been a terrible brain drain from the Philippines lately with not only blue-collar workers but white-collar ones seeking jobs abroad.

I have also always been a firm believer in supporting local industries, especially since the quality of our literature, theater, clothing and so on is pretty much at par with their foreign counterparts.

Some of my friends say there's a little bit of flawed logic at work when I go out of my way to buy books by local authors or watch local films because if they're not excellent and merely good, I'm encouraging mediocrity. I respond by explaining that refusing to support anything Filipino won't encourage better quality output but deter any future potential growth and improvement and ensure a slow, painful death for our industries.

There is a need to believe (faultily simplistic as it may be) that we can personally help make things better for the Philippines. Relying on other people to introduce improvements of a grand scale will find many waiting around for nothing.

There is the maxim that one must hope for the best, but expect the worst. This is a terrible way to live because it conjures the image of people remaining idle at home and crossing their fingers in the hope that a savior of a president will pull them out of their misery without their lifting a finger to help themselves.

In the same way that man needs to believe in a higher order to put meaning into his life (Voltaire wrote, "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him"), we Filipinos need to believe there is a better future for the Philippines to give clarity to our role as its citizens. Faith in our ability to change things is key for without it, hope is nothing.

Tina Pastelero, 21, graduated from Ateneo de Manila University with degrees in Management Engineering and Communication.

THEY SAID

Tongue in cheek

"What the opposition meant with unity and cooperation is actually a tongue-in-cheek approach."

—Sen. Joker Arroyo, warning President Macapagal-Arroyo against "playing footsie with the opposition."

Unstoppable

"No I don't think so. I think the movement in the House cannot be stopped."

—Deputy Speaker for the Visayas Raul Gonzales on the House move to amend the Constitution

Words and action

"Their actions speak louder than their words."

—AFP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Eduardo Purificacion on the New People's Army's declaration that it is ready to resume peace talks

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Pity the lowly gov't retirees

AS an ordinary government retiree, I read with disgust Neal H. Cruz's column, titled "GSIS has P25-billion deficit," last Jan. 31. And I could not help but think of the lavish spending and mismanagement by the Government Service Insurance System officials of the pension funds as shown by the purchase for some P50 million of a Juan Luna painting, its investments in Best World Resources and the P1-billion loan to the Public Estates Authority for the anomalous construction of the President Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard and many others that will adversely affect the future of millions of pensioners in the country.

Cruz also wrote: "Retirement benefits paid to GSIS officials and employees who availed themselves of the Employees Loyalty Incentive Plan (Elip) was higher by 200 percent than what was granted to the members under existing retirement laws, aside from the monthly pension that the GSIS retiree will be receiving after five years which ranges from a low of P12,400 to as high as P94,678." This also will work to the detriment of lowly retirees from other branches of the government.

In the next five years when the present GSIS officials and employees shall have retired, collecting millions upon millions of pesos in lump-sum retirement benefits, the pension funds will have been drained, leaving ordinary retirees to suffer as a result of the anomalous handling of pension funds. And the P25.167 billion deficiency as of Dec. 31, 2001 will have grown so big as to be beyond remedy.

Pity the lowly and ordinary government retirees.

—GODOFREDO O. PETEZA SR.,
J.P. Rizal Street, Barangay Camambugan,
Daet, Camarines Norte

LETTERS

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Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Local pork is better

ALLOW me a few comments regarding recent articles in your paper concerning the importation of pork.

Recently we bought at a supermarket some pre-packed pork meat, chops, fillet and cubes. It was attractively packed and the prices were lower than in our favorite supermarket.

When we cooked it, we got a surprise. It was the most tasteless pork meat we have ever had, each one of them. We then learned that it was imported.

Local swine raisers should stress the superior quality of the pigs they raise and insist that imported pork be appropriately labeled so that the consumers will be forewarned. Looking at this pale, imported meat, I am sure it has a lower nutritional value as well.

We will never buy imported pork meat again.

—PETER HEISS,
Buniel & Heiss Inc., Makati City

When women reach for the sky

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

SHE stands out, right in the middle of the photographs of the crew of the ill-fated space shuttle Columbia. You get even more intrigued when you find out her name is Kalpana Chawla.

An article in Monday's New York Times, by Amy Waldman, gives a fascinating account on Chawla, who was the first Indian astronaut to go into space.

Chawla's life, even if it ended so tragically, reminds us of how people, women especially, can overcome the most difficult odds, not just to equal but to race ahead of the more powerful.

Chawla's parents were originally from Pakistan but migrated to Punjab, India, in 1947, when the subcontinent was subdivided into two countries. (Many Hindu families chose to leave the new nation of Pakistan, which was predominantly Muslim.)

The New York Times story said that Chawla's parents reached India with almost nothing, but her father was an innovator and became a prosperous rubber industrialist. No doubt, this wealth helped Chawla to achieve what she aspired for, but there also had to be much more than just an economic edge.

Chawla grew up in Haryana, which is one of the more conservative states in India when it comes to the treatment of women. An indicator is the high rates of abortions of female fetuses in the state. Here, prospective parents use ultrasound to determine the sex of the fetus and choose to abort if they find out it is female. The female fetal abortion rates are so high that among children under the age of 6, the sex ratio in Haryana is now 820 girls for every 1,000 boys. (In a more "natural" situation, the ratio is usually one where there are actually slightly more females than males.)

Adversity probably strengthens the resolve of people trapped in such circumstances. I have been in India and Bangladesh and have always been amazed at how visible, and assertive, women are. In fact, the countries on the subcontinent—India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka—have all had women prime ministers.

Again, no doubt class and family background were important in catapulting women to positions of leadership. Like our own Cory Aquino and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, the subcontinent's prime ministers have all been widows or daughters of male politicians.

Yet, we know only too well that there are many women from the upper classes, in India or the Philippines, who would like to see women more restrained, kept at home in traditional roles. Some of these women may even have doctorates so there's certainly more to women's advancement than class and educational attainment.

In Chawla's case, we learn from the New York Times article that her father was very conservative but Chawla was lucky because she had a strong mother, and inspiring women teachers.

Reading about Chawla's situation while she was growing up in India made me think about our situation in the Philippines, where women have relatively more opportunities for social mobility, in terms of legislation and public policies, compared with her sisters in south Asia. Yet, I often suspect our families are the ones who block females from moving forward, with mothers themselves chiding a daughter who dares to dream: "*Babae ka lang*(You're only a girl)."

Chawla was apparently encouraged by women in her family and school to defy tradition. She chose to take aeronautical engineering, the only woman to do so at her college. Despite her father's disapproval, she went on to do a master's and a doctorate in the United States, and married an American, again a courageous act because the marriage wasn't arranged and her husband was not Indian.

Eventually Chawla became an American citizen and joined Nasa, the US space program. The Columbia mission was actually her second trip on a space shuttle, quite an achievement considering that there's only a handful of women astronauts in Nasa.

Chawla was 41 when she died, but clearly led a life as full as it could possibly be. Images of the Columbia crew, with Chawla in the middle, can be powerful, telling us of a woman who didn't just reach for, but soared high into, the skies. It should not be surprising if we hear more girls, American, Indian, and, I would hope, Filipino, proclaiming, with confidence, "I want to be an astronaut."

* * *

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.net

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Shuttle weakness raised 9 years ago

SPACE CENTER, Houston—Nasa was warned nine years ago that the space shuttle could fail catastrophically if debris hit the vulnerable underside of its wings during liftoff—the very scenario that may have brought down Columbia.

After receiving the warning, Nasa made changes in materials and flight rules to lessen the risk of debris breaking loose, Paul Fischbeck, an engineering professor at Carnegie Mellon University who conducted the 1994 analysis, said Tuesday.

"There are very important tiles under there. If you lose the tiles on those stretches ... it can cause the shuttle to be lost," he said.

The underside of the left wing is where Nasa is focusing its investigation into Saturday's disaster, which killed seven astronauts.

A spokesperson at Nasa's Johnson Space Center, David Drachlis, said Tuesday night that no one was available to comment on the report.

Also Tuesday, the space agency sent teams to check out reports of shuttle debris found as far west as California and Arizona—material that could shed light on the earliest stages of Columbia's breakup. Later in the day, authorities in Texas said a 1.8- to 2.1-meter section of what they believe to be part of a shuttle wing was found in a pond east of Nacogdoches.

In Vernon Parish, Louisiana, a woman out walking found a small, ragged piece of fabric with a Star of David, Sheriff Sam Craft said. The symbol, in a circle between blue and silver bars, is the flag of the Israeli Air Force and is presumably from the suit of Israeli astronaut Ilan Ramon.

Investigators also are getting new military images of the spacecraft's fiery, dying streak across the country from an Apache helicopter.

Fischbeck and a colleague at Stanford University studied the damage caused by debris during the first 50 shuttle launches and concluded that on average, 25 thermal tiles per flight sustained damage of at least 2.5 cm.

He said his risk analysis showed that the most vulnerable spots on the shuttle were the undersides of both wings close to the fuselage, and right under the crew compartment. To reach that conclusion, he weighed three factors: which tiles were most likely to be hit by debris, which tiles endured a lot of heat on atmospheric re-entry, and which tiles had critical systems underneath them.

It is not clear exactly where under the wing Columbia was hit, but just before the shuttle break up, temperature spikes were detected around the left wheel well, which is close to the fuselage, and on the left side of the fuselage itself.

Fischbeck said Nasa "took a lot of our advice to heart" and made improvements such as changing the foam insulation on the top of the booster rockets and allowing less ice to be present on the fuel tanks before liftoff. Ice forms on the tank because of the super-cold liquid hydrogen and oxygen inside. *AP*

PEOPLE at the Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C., watch US President George W. Bush speaking by a live relay at a memorial service at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas, for the seven perished space shuttle Columbia astronauts Feb. 4.

AFP

Fuselage, key sections already found

HEMPHILL, Texas—Workers discovered key sections of the space shuttle Columbia on Tuesday, including wreckage from the fuselage and landing gear, which may help investigators determine why the space craft disintegrated over Texas.

The debris, which included computer circuitry, was found in an area near the Louisiana border where the nose cone was located on Monday, said Jasper County Emergency Coordinator Billy Smith.

Recovery units paid particular attention to the area around Hemphill as recovery units searched the county's pine forests, river banks and open pastures to locate debris and remains from seven astronauts killed when the Columbia spacecraft broke apart over the American Southwest.

The independent board investigating the Columbia disaster got a first-hand look at the huge field of debris that scattered across Texas and Louisiana when the shuttle disintegrated 64 km above the earth.

Board chairman Harold Gehman led the entourage. It visited a handful of sites near Nacogdoches, Texas, where debris rained down on Saturday in the worst US space accident since Challenger blew up in 1986.

After viewing broken and burned parts from the shattered spacecraft, Gehman vowed to get to the bottom of what caused it to fall apart.

"Our first imperative is to get it right. The astronauts who will fly in future orbiter missions need to know that we have done everything we possibly can to come to the bottom of this and fix it," said Gehman, a retired Navy admiral who led the investigation in the suicide bombing of the destroyer USS Cole in Yemen. *Reuters*

No shuttle replacements seen for a decade

SEATTLE—Aviation experts believe Nasa will not replace the lost space shuttle Columbia for about 10 years, sticking to a schedule that may force the agency to rely more on Russia to supply the International Space Station.

Building a replica shuttle would be too costly, leaving a next-generation "orbital space plane" due to enter service around 2010 as the earliest possible relief for the remaining three shuttles, which could keep flying for decades to come, according to experts advising Nasa and the White House.

Columbia, which disintegrated over Texas on Saturday, killing all seven astronauts on board, was the oldest shuttle in the fleet. It was deemed too heavy for space station docking, but the vehicle had been expected to carry out a range of science experiments in space that might now be shifted to the newer shuttles.

"The remaining three shuttles will be fully booked for space station crew launches and resupply. Some of that can be done with Progress and Soyuz (Russian spacecraft), but shuttles were the mainstay for the science experiments," said Norine Noonan, dean of math and science at the College of Charleston and a Nasa Advisory Council member.

Last November, Nasa pushed back plans to retire the shuttle fleet in 2012 and retooled its Space Launch Initiative to focus on breakthrough technologies to reduce space flight costs to facilitate a complete shuttle replacement. *Reuters*

The Manila Times

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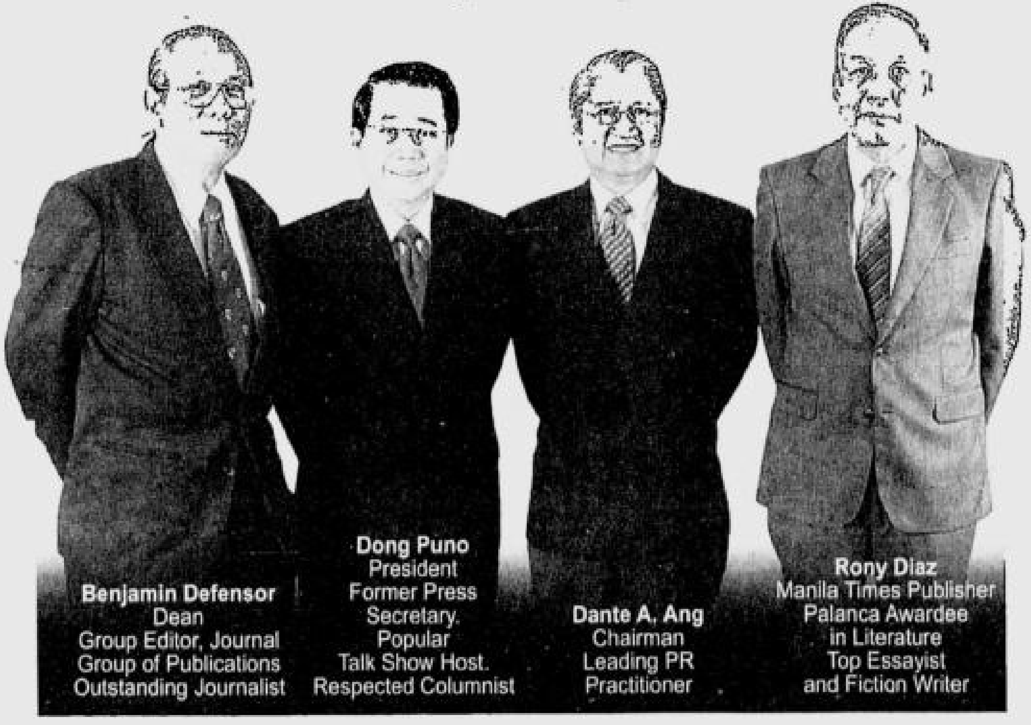

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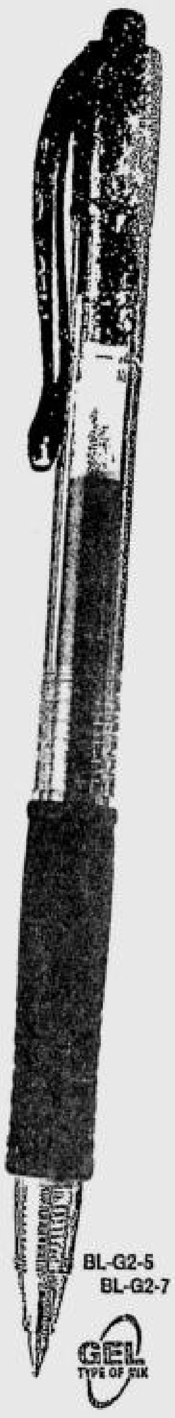

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Bush urged to open direct talks with N. Korea

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush faced urgent calls Tuesday from South Korea's next government and a key congressional ally for direct talks with North Korea before a nuclear crisis spins out of control.

A day after stoking the ire of the Stalinist state by putting heavy bombers on alert for deployment to the region, senior Bush aides were forced to defend their policy toward the Stalinist state.

An envoy for South Korea's incoming president Roh Moo-hyun emerged from talks in Washington with Secretary of State Colin Powell with a simple message.

"We hope that the United States will take a more active role in engaging in dialogue with North Korea," Chyung Dai-Chul said.

Dialogue should be in "an international setting with a multilateral approach."

The Republican Party's senior congressional foreign policy hand meanwhile issued a striking call for dialogue.

"I believe that United States officials should talk to North Korean officials about ending North Korean nuclear weapons programs with provisions of comprehensive international inspection," Senator Dick Lugar said.

Powell's number two, Richard Armitage told Lugar's Senate Foreign Relations committee it was a question of when, and not if, US and North Korean officials meet.

"Of course we are going to have to have direct talks with the North Koreans—there is no question about that," said Armitage.

But he said that the consultations would only take place when Washington was confident that it had built a "strong international platform" of backing and support for ending Pyongyang's nuclear program.

Bush aides have said they will talk to North Korea—but only about how it can end its twin nuclear weapons programs, which sparked the crisis.

They say any discussion of improving relations, economic ties or aid can only go ahead once that process is complete.

But Lugar appeared to suggest that tack was unrealistic. *AFP*

Only a tipple, not the bottle, fine for health

CHICAGO—A couple of drinks a day can provide modest protection against stroke, but once drinkers exceed five units of alcohol a day they substantially increase their risk of stroke, according to a study released Tuesday.

In an effort to clarify the sometimes-conflicting results that previous studies on alcohol and stroke have produced, researchers at Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana reviewed the findings of 35 studies over almost 20 years from 1983 to 2002.

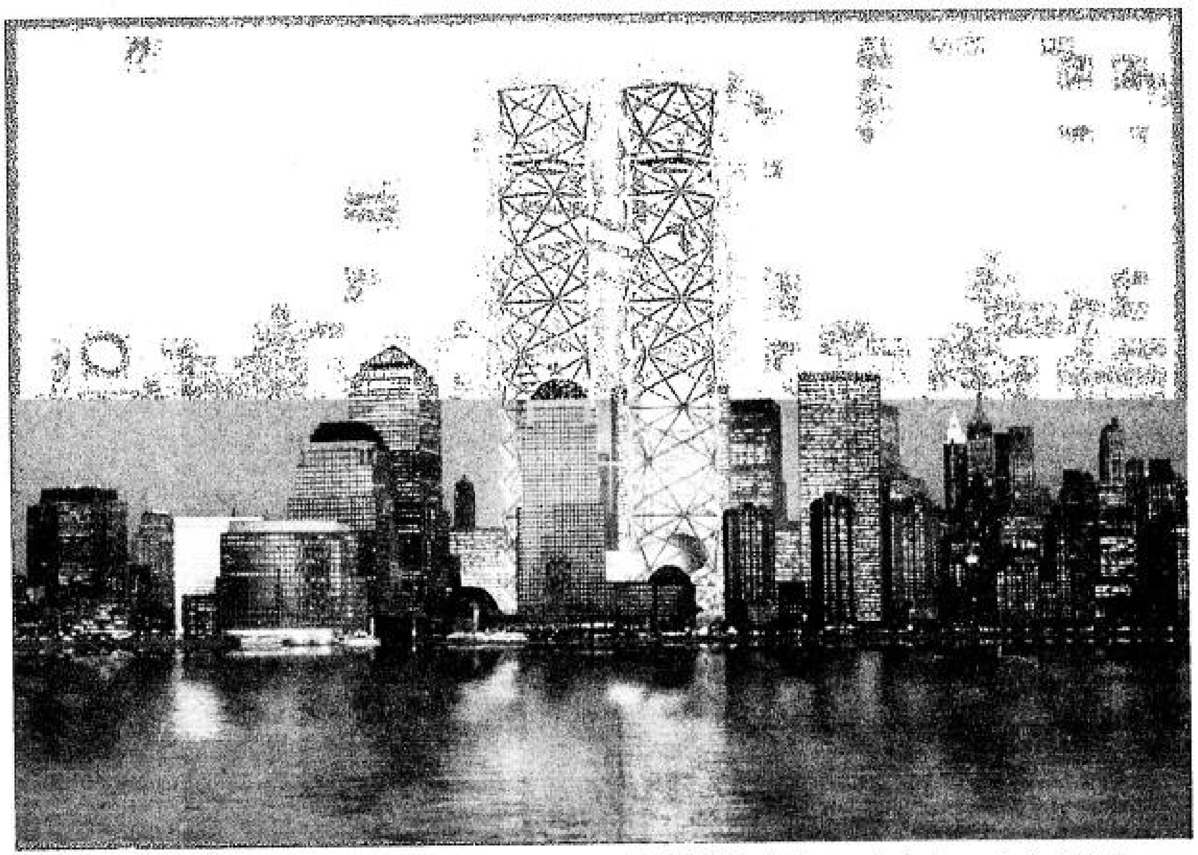
They concluded that while one or two drinks reduced the risk for total stroke by 17 percent compared to teetotalers, people knocking back five or more alcoholic beverages on a daily basis were 64 percent more likely to have a stroke—the third leading cause of death in the United States.

Heavy drinkers (as defined by the study) are also twice as likely to have a hemorrhagic stroke (where blood bleeds into the brain) as non-drinkers and run a 69 percent higher risk of ischemic stroke (where a blocked artery interrupts the blood supply to the brain).

Over 80 percent of all strokes in the United States and industrial countries are ischemic strokes.

The findings underscore the benefits of moderate alcohol consumption, the authors wrote in this week's Journal of the American Medical Association.

The findings "strongly suggest that reducing alcohol consumption in heavy drinkers should be an important approach to prevention of stroke in the general population," they said. *AFP*



THE DESIGN concept by the firm "Think" for the development of the World Trade Center site that was selected Feb. 4 as one of the two final design concepts being considered for the site.
REUTERS

2 finalists in WTC design competition

NEW YORK—Two divergent designs, both incorporating what would be the largest buildings in the world, were named Tuesday as finalists in a global competition to rebuild New York's devastated World Trade Center site.

The proposals chosen by New York officials from an initial field of nine plans were put forward by Berlin-based architect Daniel Libeskind and a New York consortium of designers known as THINK.

Both include structures that are not only taller than the trade center's fallen twin towers but also reach above the world's current highest buildings, the 452-meter Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur.

"We are advancing two extraordinary designs, which best satisfied our rigorous sets of criteria," said Roland Betts, a board member of the Lower Manhattan Development Corp. (LMDC).

The two sets of plan will be subjected to a "rigorous period of review and modification" with a final plan being chosen before the end of the month, Betts said.

Seven design teams unveiled a total of nine proposals in December for redeveloping the 6.5-hectare World Trade Center site, where nearly 2,800 people died on Sept. 11, 2001.

The Libeskind plan exposes the scarred bedrock of the site and features a garden-filled spire rising 541-meters—recalling the year of US independence.

Describing the choice of his design as a "great privilege," Libeskind said he had sought to capture the tragic essence of the terrorist attacks while reaffirming the vitality of New York and its people. *AFP*

Howard suffers no-confidence vote over Iraq

CANBERRA—Australia's upper house of parliament passed a symbolic vote of no confidence in Prime Minister John Howard on Wednesday for his handling of Iraq, illustrating the deep divide in Australia over joining any war.

Howard, a staunch US ally, has come under attack for sending troops and approving fighter jet deployments to join US and British forces in the Gulf preparing for a possible war on Iraq before the United Nations process has run its course.

Opposition and minor parties, who hold the balance of power in the 76-seat Senate, joined forces to pass the upper house's first vote of no confidence in a government or leader in its 102- year history. It was a political gesture with no legal clout.

A similar censure motion proposed in the lower House of Representatives, where the conservative government holds a majority, failed by 82 votes to 63.

Leader of the left-leaning Australian Greens, Senator Bob Brown, said the Senate's motion, passed by 33 votes to 31, marked a "historic condemnation of the government."

"This is a historic vote by the Senate, albeit on party lines as such motions always are," Brown told reporters.

"John Howard has let this nation down. His gross mishandling of Australia's involvement deserved the strongest parliamentary rebuke."

But a bid by the Greens to amend the no-confidence motion to condemn any Australian involvement in Iraq, with or without a UN mandate, was defeated when the main opposition Labor party voted with the government.

Canberra has yet to commit itself to joining any military action in Iraq, whether UN-approved or US-led, but Howard's decision to pre-deploy troops opened up a sharp political divide on the issue and prompted public protests. *Reuters*

Illegals sent to Hong Kong in suitcases

HONG KONG—Illegal immigrants from India and Pakistan are being smuggled into Hong Kong inside suitcases by a syndicate operating in mainland China, it was reported here Wednesday.

The immigrants were reportedly wheeled across the Lowu border crossing from Shenzhen after paying between 250 and $300, the South China Morning Post reported, citing unidentified sources.

The crossings were usually made at peak times when there were large crowds and customs officers were less likely to check luggage.

The syndicate is known in Indian and Pakistani communities in Hong Kong as "Mukha Airlines," after the man who has been running it out of Shenzhen since mid-2001.

The Post report said a pool of 'pilots' were on duty at the border to wheel across the human cargo, and were paid HK$500 Hong Kong ($64 dollars) each trip.

Mukha, an Indian national, is understood to be in his late 20s. The immigration department has not confirmed the report.

But the operation was temporarily suspended after a Hong Kong court jailed a Pakistani national for 18 months for trying to illegally enter the territory in a suitcase. *AFP*

Chavez to impose exchange controls to stop capital flight

CARACAS—President Hugo Chavez confirmed Tuesday that his government would impose hard currency trading restrictions starting Thursday to try to stop mounting capital flight from damaging the already shellshocked economy.

Chavez said at a ceremony he had selected Captain Edgar Fernandez—another of the leaders of a February 4, 1994, failed coup in which the former paratrooper and now elected president Chavez took part—to lead the Currency Administration Board.

"Not one more dollar for the putchists: the dollars, the bolivars, belong to the people," the leftist-populist Chavez said.

Faced with a barrage of criticism from business leaders over the plan, Chavez insisted "currency trading restrictions are not good or bad in and of themselves; it depends on how they are used and what the results are."

On Jan. 21, with an opposition general strike in its 63rd day, Chavez's government suspended the domestic sale of hard currencies, first for five days and then extended the delay for another week. That day, the currency—the bolivar—hit a record low of 1,919.90 to the dollar from 1,829.90 a day earlier.

Chavez said Jan. 26 at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, that currency controls could help stop capital flight and speculation, and said he wanted to slap a "Tobin tax" on speculative currency trading.

First proposed by Nobel Prize-winning economist James Tobin in the 1970s, the idea of a currency transactions tax, has drawn support from those who believe currency speculation has deepened recent financial crises, and that a charge on currency transfers would calm speculation while simultaneously raising huge sums for development.

Finance Minister Tobias Nobrega said the controls will be aimed at preventing foreign currency reserves from plunging, after a big drop during the first two weeks of January.

Nobrega said those reserves slid by $574 million between Dec. 2, when the opposition-sponsored strike was launched, and Jan. 21.

"Any exchange control mechanism creates definite possibilities for corruption and distortions, as a parallel or black market emerges, and ends up being the reference point in pricing goods and services," the business magazine Veneconomia said in an editorial.

The magazine is forecasting a six-percent to 10-percent contraction in Venzuela's economy for this year, and economists also expect currency controls could help drive inflation higher. Unemployment is at more than 16 percent.

Meanwhile in this oil-rich country with an impoverished majority, middle- and upper-class shoppers stormed sprawling Caracas malls on the first day most stores opened after the weekend's end to the general strike. Shop owners were slashing prices to try to make up for lost time and cut their losses, and jittery shoppers rushed to get deals before price controls they expect might come.

"Everything is still at the old prices, because with the exchange controls and the disaster the strike has created, we are not going to be able to put clothes on our backs," said one woman who asked not to be named as she rifled through markdowns at a Spanish-owned clothing chain in the Sambil mall. *AFP*

HUGO

A YUGOSLAV army soldier, right, laughs as an officer relaxes on the backseat of a luxury Mercedes 600 Pullman Convertible , in their unit's base in Belgrade, Feb. 4. The Yugoslav government will auction 13 luxurious limousines and other vehicles that once formed the motorcade of Yugoslavia's late dictator Josip Broz Tito.
AP

Legislators dissolve Yugoslavia, create 'Serbia and Montenegro'

BELGRADE—A new European state was born Tuesday when the Yugoslav parliament voted to dissolve Yugoslavia and replace it with a new union called "Serbia and Montenegro."

"We have finished a major task and we just need some time now to breathe life into the new state," parliamentary chairman Dragoljub Micunovic told reporters after the new constitution was passed to applause in the asssembly.

"After both chambers of the federal parliament adopted the constitutional charter, and following its adoption by the Serbian and Montenegrin parliaments, I proclaim the constitutional charter of Serbia and Montenegro," he said minutes later as the new country was founded.

The vote was 84 in favor and 31 against, automatically rendering the 1992 Yugoslav constitution null and void and consigning the country to history after nine months of gruelling negotiations.

The parliament, which will assume a caretaker role until a new central assembly takes over in the coming weeks, also passed a law on the technicalities for setting up the new union.

The constitution guarantees a high degree of autonomy for the two republics, which also have the right to hold referendums on independence after three years, a key clause for Montenegro's pro-independence government.

The European Union has pushed Serbia, with some 10 million people, and Montenegro, with just 650,000, to remain allied for the sake of stability in the Balkans but many people in both countries believe a final split is only a matter of time.

EU foreign envoy Javier Solana welcomed the creation of a new state of Serbia and Montenegro but said "the real work now begins." "I am sincerely pleased about the adoption of the constitutional charter" for the new state, Solana said in a statement.

"The real work now begins to make the new union work," Solana said. "There is still a lot of work to be done." He insisted that "it is up to the new institutions and the governments of Serbia and Montenegro to make the union function and make the possibility of European integration a reality."

The new state's first president will be elected by its central parliament in the coming months. *AFP*

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Across the NATION

Assistant Editor **Tony Bergonia**

Lina says he'll really quit if 'jueteng' is not stopped

BAGUIO CITY—Interior Secretary Jose Lina yesterday said he would abide by his self-appointed deadline of May 6 to curb illegal gambling operations like jueteng or resign from the Cabinet.

"This is a personal (crusade) for me. Jueteng toppled a president. Jueteng was the reason I resigned from the (Cabinet of former President Joseph Estrada). Jueteng was the reason why I and Estrada broke up," Lina told participants to the Baguio conference on righteousness on Wednesday.

Last year, Lina relieved seven police officials from their posts for their inability to curb jueteng.

Lina had vowed to quit the Cabinet if he failed to stop jueteng about nine months ago.

Since December 2002, however, police yearend reports on the jueteng crackdown had been lackluster. In the Cordillera, only 390 suspects in illegal gambling operations were arrested. No one was convicted.

"I have since been heckled by critics," he said, despite the arrest of 33,000 jueteng bet collectors last year. No financier, however, has been put under arrest.

He said his decision to remove the Central Luzon police director and six other police officials proved his sincerity in combating illegal gambling.

The sacked police officials had all denied participation in jueteng.

"There are policemen who do not arrest (jueteng) suspects. I am not saying that all of them do not, I am saying there are policemen who (protect) gambling lords," he said.

"If I had to pursue this line of action, maybe everyone would be relieved."

But Lina said critics should start focusing now on Congress where a proposed measure correcting the anti-gambling law is pending.

The bill seeks stiffer punishment for violations of the anti-gambling law.

Without the bill, police efforts to crack down on gambling lords would ultimately be inutile, he said.

He said the arrest before the 2001 elections of a suspected gambling lord in Central Luzon had been almost meaningless because gambling lords were allowed to post bail or pay fine of P6,000 only.

Lina said the anti-gambling law also limits government's access to gambling lords. "In jueteng, gambling lords stay away from the betting. They are holed up in their rich mansions, because all they do is finance (these operations)," he said.

Some local officials admit that they tolerate jueteng because it is from the gambling operations that they get money to finance weddings, funerals and hospitalization of their constituents.

One mayor was quoted as saying that without jueteng, his earnings as a public official won't be sufficient to provide the financial needs of the people who approach him almost on a daily basis for help for various problems, most of them funerals and weddings. *Vincent Cabreza and Jovelyn Reyes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

NOTICEABLY absent from the rounded-up group of jueteng collectors are the big fish. The NBI, through head Reynaldo Wycoco, recently arrested jueteng personnel in Central Luzon and herded them to the NBI gym. ERIK ARAZAS

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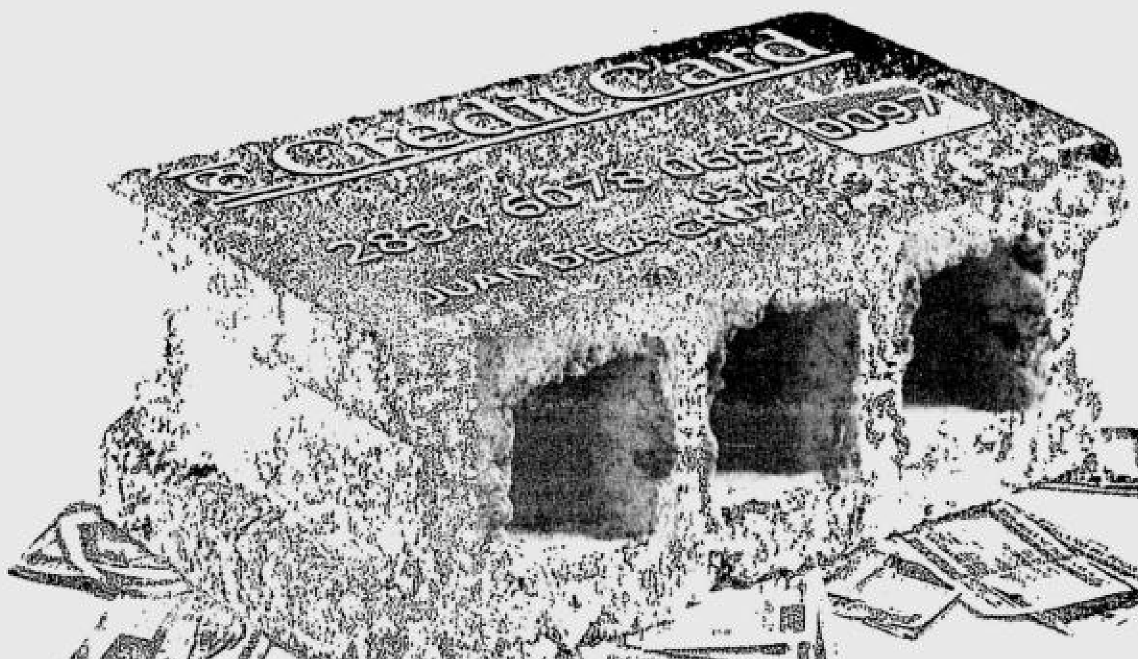

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Slain datu's kin fear whitewash in killing

GRIEVING sister of slain Datu Manliguyan. BADA TORRALBA

SAN LUIS, Agusan del Sur—The family of a slain Talaandig datu is still seeking justice amid reports that his killers are still on active duty as members of the Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Unit (Cafgu) here.

Datu Manliguyan, chair of Sitio Akbayan, Barangay Binicalan here, was allegedly killed by seven Cafgu members on Jan. 17 in Barangay Mahagsay after he allegedly grabbed the M-14 rifle of one of the militiamen and tried to escape.

Six of the Cafgu members were identified by witnesses as Jose Martinez, Tempo Ginumbay, Tadie Mangganahan, Antag Leganio, Dominico Gomez and Ejek Manseliohan, all of whom are also members of the Banwaon tribe.

According to Eddie Havana, one of the witnesses and a nephew of the datu, the Cafgu members fetched the datu from his hut upon orders of their officials to invite him for questioning on his alleged involvement in a pangayao (tribal war) against the Bungcalas family in Barangay Binicalan in December.

"Datu Manliguyan voluntarily accompanied them and the Cafgu members assured us he will not be harmed because they said they know the law that any civilians should not be harmed," Havana said.

The following day Havana and his companions went to fetch the datu at a detachment on Km. 29 in Barangay Mahagsay but before reaching the detachment, they found the body of the datu lying on a road.

The datu suffered bullet wounds in the head, neck, arm and back. He also had hack wounds.

In an interview with the INQUIRER, Tadi Mangganahan and Ejek Manseliohan, two of the suspects, admitted they killed the datu as he tried to escape.

"We rested for a few minutes before we were about to proceed to our detachment and the datu asked our permission to heed the call of nature. But when he turned around he suddenly grabbed the rifle of Ejek holding the front side while Ejek was holding the butt. Ejek was asking for help so I readily shot him three times with my M-14 rifle," Mangganahan said.

He added that another companion, Tempo Ginumbay, shot the datu twice also with his M-14 rifle because he was trying to escape.

"When we reached him he was still moving and one of our companions told us not to shoot him because it was a waste of bullet so Tempo hacked him so he would die," Mangganahan said.

But Omar Seguiro, the datu's son, said no amount of reasoning could justify the killing.

"Even if indeed he grabbed a rifle and tried to escape, it is not justifiable to kill him with five bullets and even use a jungle bolo just to prevent him from escaping," Seguiro said.

Col. Maximo Caro, commander of the 36th Infantry Battalion, told the INQUIRER they would not tolerate what the Cafgu members did.

He also said the Cafgu members would not be shielded from criminal liability.

But in a radio interview, Col. Francisco Simbahon, 4th Infantry Division civil affairs unit commander, said the datu was killed because he was a member of the New People's Army. *Ma. Kristina E. Cassion, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Jobless rate in Cordillera alarms bosses

By Maurice Malanes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—After he placed an advertisement recently in a local weekly for two female desk clerks, hotelier Peter Ng was surprised when more than 300 women applicants trooped to his hotel.

"I didn't realize we had this number of jobless people here," said Ng. "There must have been more applicants had I not narrowed my advertisement to female clerks."

Some of the applicants, he said, were over-qualified because some were certified public accountants and nurses.

Dr. Charles Cheng, who runs the Baguio Filipino-Chinese General Hospital here, also advertised recently his hospital's need for one nurse and more than 100 applicants came.

"No statistics can better illustrate the real labor situation than this," he said, referring to the hordes of applicants who came to his hospital.

Statistics from the Cordillera office of the Department of Labor and Employment reinforce the experiences of both Ng and Cheng.

The Cordillera, as of December 2002, had an 8.8 percent unemployment rate. This means 53,000 of the upland region's 596,000-strong labor force have no jobs, according to Antonette Sta. Maria, DOLE statistician.

The figure also means one out of every 11 qualified workers is jobless. The 2002 unemployment rate in the Cordillera increased by 2.7 percent compared to 2001 figures.

But Sta. Maria said the region's unemployment rate is lower than the 11.2-percent unemployment rate nationwide.

In Baguio City, the bulk of the labor force, which includes those above 15 and below 65, is in the service sector such as hotels and restaurants.

In the city, at least 62,000 people are employed in the service sector, 24,000 in the industry sector (mainly at the Philippine Export Zone Authority), and 3,000 in agriculture.

Neighboring Benguet, which is known for its commercial vegetable industry, has the bulk of its employed labor force in the agriculture sector.

Benguet has 66,000 employed in agriculture, 36,000 in the service sector, and 24,000 in industries, mainly in two mining companies.

But Benguet has a slightly higher unemployment rate at 9.4 percent or 13,000 of a labor force of 39,000. This means one out of 10 qualified workers has no job in the province.

The unemployment rates in the Cordillera and in the country are much higher than the worldwide 6.5-percent unemployment rate or 180 million jobless out of a global labor force of 2.8 billion, according to the International Labor Organization.

Particularly disturbing to Benguet and Mt. Province farmers and officials is the possible impact of unregulated vegetable importation on both provinces' agricultural labor force.

Both farmers and local traders have taken to task not only the Department of Agriculture and the Bureau of Customs, but also Malacañang for the importation and smuggling of vegetables, which are now killing a major job-generating industry.

Last year, local traders in La Trinidad, Benguet, reported that they had to let go of scores of hired men and women who cleaned newly harvested carrots after imported and smuggled carrots and other vegetables flooded the country.

ROUNDUP

Priest's body found

SAN JOSE CITY—Priests and parishioners mourned the death of Fr. Mylo Ladislao Dacayo II whose body was found last week in his room in the convent of the Sta. Cruz Church in Manila. Dacayo, 32, was reviewing for the defense of his master's thesis in Canon law in the University of Sto. Tomas when he died in his sleep on Jan. 28. He was assistant parish priest of the Catholic parish here and rector of the retreat house of the diocese of San Jose. He will be buried tomorrow in Talugtog, Nueva Ecija. *Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

NPA rebel captured

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Government soldiers on Saturday captured a New People's Army leader who was reportedly with a group that tried to kidnap an executive of a logging firm in Aurora province, Army officials here said. Officials said Edgar Fajardo, 20, was with a 30-member NPA group that tried to abduct Romeo John Roxas II, operations manager of Green Circle, in neighboring Dingalan, Aurora, in October. Fajardo, who belonged to the Front 1, codenamed "Zannec Marketing," of the NPA's Nueva Ecija committee, was alone in a hut along the Umiray River in General Nakar, Quezon, when soldiers captured him. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Whale dies

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT ZONE—A dehydrated pygmy sperm whale (Kogia breviceps), found in a beach in San Narciso, Zambales, with severe bruises and shark bites, died on Wednesday despite efforts to save it. The adult male whale was found by residents on the shores of Barangay La Paz in San Narciso on Tuesday. Dodo Ramos, a resort owner in the area, reported the find to Ocean Adventure experts. He said the dying whale was about to be slaughtered by residents. A statement from Ocean Adventure said the whale received immediate rehydration, antibiotic therapy and steroids, and was placed under round-the-clock monitoring and veterinary care before it died. *Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

NPA rebel slain

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—A suspected New People's Army rebel was killed in an encounter with Army troops in Barangay Rangay, Banga town, South Cotabato on Monday. Col. Alexander Yano, 601st Army brigade commander, said the charred remains of an unidentified NPA rebel was recovered inside the gutted house of a certain Ta Wating. Wating's house was razed when hit by an M-203 shell from the Army soldiers. Last Monday's encounter was the second since the Army stepped up its offensives against NPA rebels in the area. On Jan. 28, the same Army unit clashed with the NPA rebels in Barangay Rangay, resulting in the arrest of a 16-year-old NPA guerrilla. *Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

CBCP asks dioceses to 'fine-tune' guidelines on Church sex offenses

CEBU CITY—Amid criticisms of official indifference to reports of sex scandals involving priests, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines has come up with guidelines on how to deal with such cases.

"We have finished the document but we need feedback from the dioceses before we approve it in July," Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal told reporters late Sunday.

Vidal said the draft was being sent back to the dioceses for fine-tuning and discussion before it can be presented at the CBCP's 87th plenary assembly in July.

He would not reveal what the draft contained, saying the provisions had to be discussed by experts on canon law, psychology and other fields.

Vidal has just returned from attending the 87th CBCP plenary assembly and the World Meeting of Families in Manila.

He said two issues were discussed at the assembly: the guidelines and the use of genetically modified organisms in food such as BT-corn.

Vidal said the CBCP had decided not to endorse the planting of BT-corn in the country's agricultural areas because of its possible health effects.

On the guidelines, Vidal said there would be additional inputs from the bishops and the experts as well as from lay people.

The CBCP's move to come up with guidelines came up after a spate of reports on alleged sexual abuses by priests.

On Jan. 14, Augustinian priest Apolinario "Jing" Mejorada was officially charged with violations of the Child Abuse Act. The case was filed by one of his alleged victims. Mejorada has yet to submit a counter-affidavit.

Vidal said the case would be left up to the courts.

The latest case is that of Antipolo Bishop Crisostomo Yalung who was forced to resign after it came out that he had fathered a son in November.

Yalung's case was not discussed during the assembly because there was not enough time, said Vidal.

Instead of commenting on Yalung's case, he pointed reporters to the provisions in the Church's Canon Law that governs the actions and responsibilities of diocesan and religious priests.

The more conservative priests and bishops have repeatedly pointed to the absence of any provisions in the Canon Law that addresses sexual misdeeds by the clergy. *Lino K. Parone Jr., PDI Visayas Bureau*

GMA trip to Kuwait proves worthwhile for 3 Filipinos detained for murder

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—Bacolod native Teddy Tomaro and three other Filipinos who were cleared of killing a Canadian in Kuwait will finally return home in April.

The Kuwaiti justice minister gave this assurance to Negros Occidental Rep. Jose Apolinario Lozada who accompanied President Macapagal-Arroyo during her visit to Kuwait on Monday to check on the condition of Filipino workers there amid tension between the United States and Iraq.

Lozada said the President discussed the case of Tomaro with Kuwaiti Emir Shiek Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah while he met with the Kuwaiti justice minister on the case of the three jailed Filipinos.

Lozada said the Kuwaiti government had appealed the acquittal of Tomaro and the three other Filipinos. The appeal is scheduled for hearing in March.

But, he added, the Kuwaiti justice minister assured them that Tomaro and his companions could return home in April.

In the meantime, he said, Tomaro is staying at the Philippine Embassy in Kuwait.

While at the embassy, Lozada called Tomaro's wife, Raema, in Bacolod so she could speak to her husband on the telephone.

Tomaro was released from the Kuwaiti jail on Oct. 27, 2002, exactly a year after he was arrested, after the court of appeals cleared him and three others of the murder of Luc Ethier, a Canadian.

The others who were acquitted were Ethier's Filipino wife, Mary Jane Bitos, and other Filipinos Norsa Talib Esick and Lourdes Viray.

Ethier was shot dead while walking with Bitos through a busy shopping area in Fahaheel, south of Kuwait City on Oct. 10, 2001. Bitos was shot three times during the attack.

Tomaro was sentenced to life imprisonment for killing Ethier while Bitos got three years for giving false testimony. Esick was meted with a five-year jail term for adultery and possession of firearm. Viray was sentenced to three months imprisonment for not reporting the crime.

But the Kuwaiti appeals court dropped all the charges and declared that the four were innocent. The Filipinos, however, were prevented from going home after the Kuwaiti government appealed the decision.

DENR chief sacks region head for illegal logging

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun on Monday relieved Fernando Quililan, Northern Mindanao regional environment director, after it was found that he committed irregularities in the release of seized illegal logs.

Earlier, Gozun sent a three-man investigating team here to look into allegations by the military and various environmental groups that Quililan had been jeopardizing environment laws because of his collusion with traffickers of illegal forest products.

They also accused Quililan of accepting bribes from illegal loggers.

The investigating team said that Quililan indeed committed erroneous decisions by releasing seized logs even if these lacked documents.

These included the release in December 2002 of at least 6,409 board feet of logs the military had confiscated in Barangay Balubal here.

Lt. Col. Johnny Macanas, spokesperson of the Army's 4th Infantry Division, said the Certificate of Timber/Lumber Origin (CTLO) of the logs was spurious.

Quililan was also accused of being behind the release of 28,766 board feet of lauan seized by the Task Force Kalasan, an environmental watchdog under the city government of Iligan City.

Gozun ordered Quililan to "immediately clear" his financial and property accountabilities with the DENR regional office and to report to Manila.

"With Secretary Gozun's action we are encouraged and challenged to exert more effort in going after the illegal logging operations in our area of responsibility. As of now, we have only two remaining options to take: protect the forest or perish," a visually jubilant Macanas said.

Sources told the INQUIRER that Gozun could appoint Raoul Geollegue, Western Visayas DENR director, as Quililan's replacement.

"When the new DENR chief comes, we will request for a dialogue with him together with environmental groups (so we) could launch a crackdown on members of this environment mafia," Macanas said.

Bencyrus Ellorin, Task Force Macajalar spokesperson, said they were happy that Gozun heard their plea against Quililan.

But he admitted that the relief order only solved part of the problem.

"We are happy that Secretary Gozun finally spurred reforms in her agency," said Ellorin.

Macanas urged Gozun not to reassign Quililan to another region but to pursue the charges against him. *Grace C. Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Baguio's engineering solution to pollution: Flat roads

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Often the bane of lowland drivers, the city's uphill roads will soon be "re-engineered" to help curb pollution that has been plaguing downtown Baguio, Vice Mayor Betty Lourdes Tabanda said.

Tabanda said the city government had been weighing the need for either a series of "flattened roads" or a traffic scheme that would convert all inclined city streets into exclusive "downhill routes."

The recommendation came after a recent World Bank report showed that Baguio, Cebu City, Metro Davao and Metro Manila are "critically polluted."

Rolando Reyes, air quality expert of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, said "uphill roads, which are common to a mountain city like Baguio, require drivers to accelerate and consequently burn more gasoline to navigate them."

"If a particular vehicle's ejection pump is not serviced well, the engine will not burn up all the gasoline that is pumped into the system, and that is what causes the carbon monoxide . . . the sulfur dioxide emissions, which we know as pollution," Reyes said.

"Even the new concept PM10 pollution had been emitted from uphill acceleration," Reyes added.

PM10 refers to the international standard, Particulate Matter, which in Baguio's case, registers as 10 microns in diameter, said Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun when she discussed the WB report in Tuba, Benguet, last month.

"But we are banking on an engineering solution to correct our road system," Tabanda said.

The city has 168 roads, most of which exceed the 15 degree public works standard for inclined roads, said Leo Bernardez, city engineer.

"The steepest Baguio road has an inclination of 30 degrees, partly because residents who built their houses on cliff sides traced their roads around the mountain's basic contour," he said.

"Manila drivers find these steep roads difficult because the climb is usually for a short distance."

Gozun told the INQUIRER that the four highly urbanized and heavily populated cities, sampled for the WB study, are exposed to PM10 pollution, which exceeds risk standards.

"A hair (strand) is about 75 microns. So talagang even as we sit here, even kung mag-aircon tayo, kahit maglagay ako ng panyo, hihingahin ko pa rin ang PM10 (even if we put on the air conditioners or cover our faces with handkerchiefs, we will still breathe in PM10)," Gozun said.

She said the US standard is PM2.5 but the Philippines has no equipment to measure this level of pollution.

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INQUIRER Southern Luzon
Editor Jun Bandayrel ◎ Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

The expectant Madonna

By Romulo Ponte
Pangil, Laguna

OUT of curiosity and, possibly, to get cured, Lorna (not her real name) traveled all the way from Sta. Cruz town in Laguna to the parish church in Pangil to see for herself the so-called expectant Blessed Virgin.

Lorna was then suffering from frequent headaches. Together with other devotees, she took some holy water at the foot of the Nuestra Señora de la O (Our Lady of the O) in the Church of the Nativity.

"My excruciating head ailment was gone," she said.

Pangil residents have spoken about the many "miracles" attributed to the Madonna. According to them, the Lady also intercedes for couples who want to have children.

The parish church is unique because only a few churches in the Catholic world actually enshrine the image of the Nuestra Señora de la O. Among them are the Temple de Nuestra de la O in Sevilla and the Iglesia de la O in Chipiona, both in Spain.

The appellative "de la O" comes from the "O Antiphons" of the Roman Breviary, which are recited during the special period of Advent.

In these "O Antiphons," the Church expresses its deep longing for the coming of the Messiah and praises the Blessed Mother for allowing the Incarnate Word to "pitch a dwelling" in her womb.

Just exactly when this devotion was introduced in Pangil is not known.

According to a brochure prepared by the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC), Prince Carlos, the son of King Philip V of Spain, was banished from his country in 1724 and was sent to the Philippines. The young prince visited Pangil as a guest of the Franciscans. He stayed in the convent, the biggest in the province before it was destroyed during World War II.

In 1728, the King lifted the exile and ordered the prince to return. When he became King Charles III, he sent the statues of the Nuestra Señora de la O and the Santo Niño de la O to Pangil as a gesture of gratitude for its hospitality.

Since then a nine-day novena is held every year from Dec. 16 to 24 to honor the Santo Niño de la O.

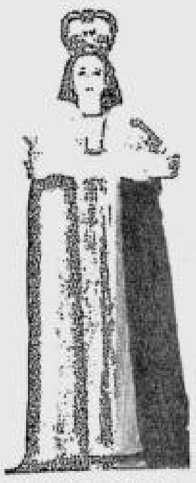
During the American regime, a cholera epidemic struck the town, killing many persons, according to the PPC brochure. So many residents were dying at the same time that the bodies had to be buried hurriedly.

One day, the statue of the Nuestra Señora was nowhere to be found at the altar, the brochure narrated. Then someone saw a beautiful long-haired lady swimming in what is known as Hulo in the Pangil River. The lady was seen going to the church.

Many people followed and saw that the hair of the Nuestra Señora de la O was dripping wet. When the news about the incident spread, people went to Hulo to swim, while others fetched water and bathed the sick.

The epidemic disappeared and the residents attributed this to the Señora.

THE WRITER is the priest of the Our Lady of the Nativity parish church in Pangil, Laguna.



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Color-coded birth control

By Juan Escandor Jr.
PILI, Camarines Sur

NECKLACES meant to guide practitioners of natural birth control were distributed to health workers in Pili, Camarines Sur on Friday as the provincial government renewed its campaign to promote natural family planning.

SDM necklace

Aside from being a decorative piece, the necklace is a tool to remind a couple about the fertile periods of the woman under the "Standard Days Method" (SDM), a scientific way of natural birth control developed by the Institute for Reproductive Health (IRH) at Georgetown University in the United States in 1996.

Couples are guided by color-coded beads to avoid unplanned pregnancy through abstention.

The necklace has 33 beads with a black band. The beads are strung in the following sequence: 12 white, seven brown, one chocolate brown, five brown, one black, one red and six brown.

When correctly used, the IRH claimed that the SDM was 95-percent effective. A typical use (combination of correct use and non-compliance) yielded an effectiveness rate of 88 percent.

The SDM is different from the Calendar Rhythm Method because users do not have to track cycle length for six months and perform arithmetical calculations before starting the method.

Based on the onset of menstruation to assist women in finding out the fertile days of their menstrual cycle, the SDM uses a 12-day fertile period because the cycle length of ovulation of a woman varies from time to time. Studies say ovulation happens in days 8 to 19.

Beads

The beads represent the days of a menstrual cycle, while the black band slipped through the beads serves as indicator.

Brown beads represent the "safe" days when the couple can copulate without the woman getting pregnant; the white ones indicate the "unsafe" or fertile days.

The SDM can also determine the duration of a user's menstrual cycle.

The introduction of the necklace in population control has brought more impetus to the natural family planning program being advocated by the provincial government.

Gov. Luis Villafuerte said the program would be fully institutionalized this year with the setting up of clinics serving couples who practice natural birth control methods.

Other methods

But it does not discount the use of artificial birth control that the government has been pursuing for several decades, Villafuerte said. The use of artificial birth control methods, he said, was necessary in abnormal situations but added that the couples must be free to practice what they believe is right for them.

He said the provincial government would further improve on the original SDM necklaces from the IRH by producing its own necklaces and bracelets made from indigenous materials and using the same concept.

The necklaces and bracelets are to be designed as women's accessories that can be casually worn to encourage SDM practice, he said.

English as medium of instruction

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Since FUSE was established in December 1994, its founders led by Dr. Lucio C. Tan, then Senate President Edgardo J. Angara and then Congressman Salvador H. Escudero III have always advocated the use of English as medium of instruction. Later, FUSE members conducted teacher-training programs and prepared video instruction materials to help improve the teaching of English, a vital medium for learning Math and the Sciences.

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In support of the policy on English as medium of instruction, FUSE commits all resources at its disposal to help the President carry out this new thrust. We will intensify our teacher-training programs in the countryside and distribute more English instructional tapes to more schools.

Congratulations President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo!

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Terror warning in RP raised

From page A1

Reyes said the US government had not sought specific support for its planned war. He said, without elaborating, that the President had already announced the kind of support that the Philippines would extend to the US-led coalition.

Reyes also acknowledged the possibility of more terrorist attacks by the al-Qaida and its allied groups in the event of a US-Iraq war. But like Santiago, he said that the AFP was prepared to deal with such contingencies.

"Some people are trying to say that we should worry about this Islamic passion being whipped up," he said, adding:

"I say that in the Philippines, the Muslim community is aware that there is no war between religions or between ethnic groups.

"This is a war between those who propagate terrorism and those who oppose it. So there is nothing religious or ethnic about this. Our people know that, we can handle it."

Proactive position

Ms Macapagal's spokesperson, Ignacio Bunye, defended her hawkish stance and denied that it "may be unnecessarily dragging the country into conflict or danger."

"There has to be a time to take a proactive position to protect the interest of our OFWs and to stand side by side with the international coalition for peace and democracy. Both are important to our national interest," Bunye said in a statement.

Bunye also said the President's remarks were "directed against [Iraqi President] Saddam Hussein and not at the Iraqi people, who yearn for peace and democracy."

Sen. Francis Pangilinan, however, pointed out that the "most effective way" of ensuring the safety of the OFWs was "to push for a peaceful settlement of the US-Iraq controversy" and "to oppose vigorously the outbreak of war."

Pangilinan said a war would only create more hardships, including massive unemployment, and aggravate the already shaky economic situation.

"We do not need this war. In this case, our interests and that of the US are not compatible," he said.

Neutrality

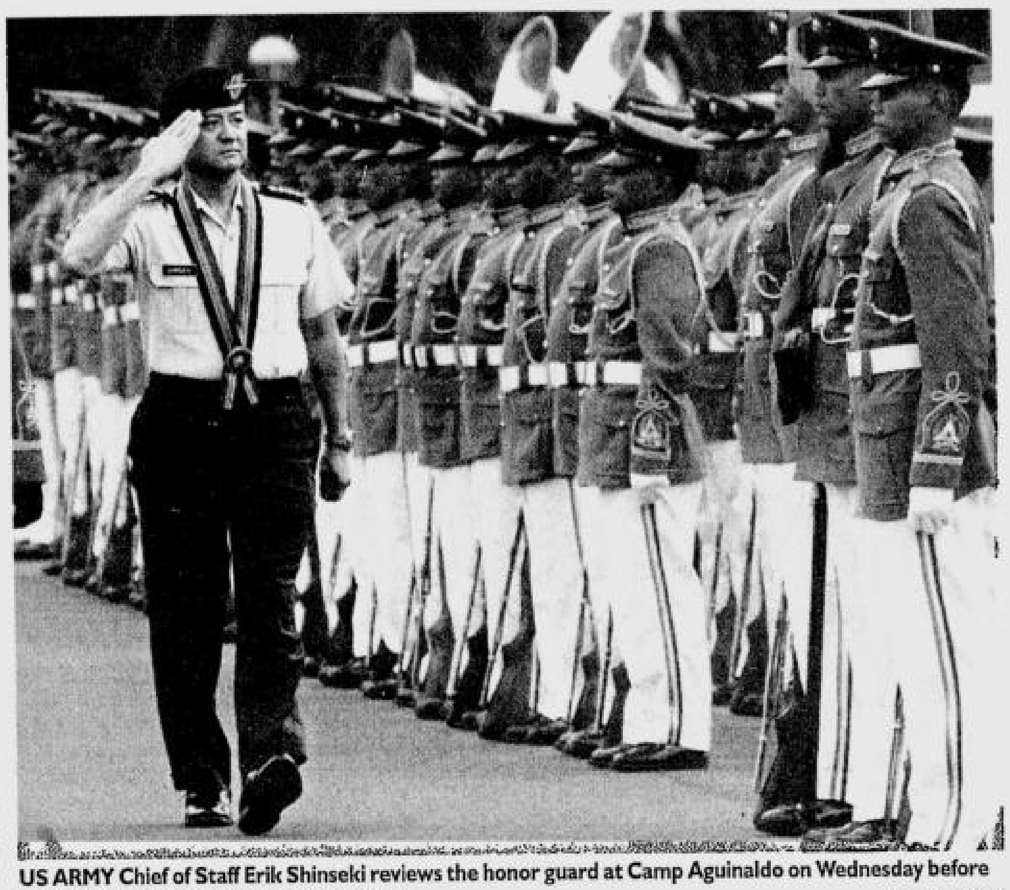
At the House, the newly formed Legislators Against War (LAW) filed a resolution calling on the President to immediately suspend the RP-US joint military exercises and order the withdrawal of American troops as an expression of neutrality on the US-Iraq war.

Bayan Muna Representatives Satur Ocampo, Crispin Beltran and Liza Maza spearheaded the resolution, which was also signed by Representatives Carlos Padilla and Ted Failon from the minority and Representatives Juan Miguel Zubiri, Roseller Barinaga, Ernie Clarete and Benasing Macarambon Jr. from the ruling coalition.

Ocampo said he and his two party mates would network with senators and eventually link up with Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr. and anti-war groups in denouncing the impending US action against Iraq.

Ocampo later delivered a privileged speech saying: "Why is GMA placing the whole country in the camp of aggression? Why is she putting all our people in harm's way?"

In their resolution, the lawmakers said the government should take a neutral stance "to safeguard the paramount interests of the nation's security and the safety of 1.6 million OFWs in the Middle East and to uphold the Filipino people's aspiration for global peace and justice."



US ARMY Chief of Staff Erik Shinseki reviews the honor guard at Camp Aguinaldo on Wednesday before meeting Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes.

EDWIN BACASMAS

They noted that a second and bigger Gulf War was looming "although the US case for war at the UN Security Council remains unsubstantiated in the absence of strong evidence" of Iraqi weapons.

They said the Macapagal administration's pro-US posturing was going against the general sentiment, and cited the Social Weather Stations survey showing that 70 percent of Filipinos preferred a neutral position and that 72 percent were against Philippine support for the US military action.

They also said the presence of US troops in the country made it a target for retaliatory attacks from enemies of the United States but not necessarily of the Philippines.

In a news conference, Minority Leader Padilla urged other congressmen to join LAW.

"In my view, the Philippines should distance itself from the impending US attack on Iraq," he said. "Instead of egging it on, we should be telling the US that such a war would have devastating consequences not just on Iraq but on the whole world."

Macarambon said the President should "stop supporting" Bush and instead take the side of the United Nations.

Beltran said the President had the "temerity" not to consult Congress before declaring strong support for US action against Iraq.

Understanding

Foreign Secretary Blas Ople said the President would consult leaders of Congress before deciding on how the Philippines would conduct itself when the US-Iraq crisis reaches the point of no return.

In a news conference, Ople said Ms Macapagal already had an understanding with leaders of Congress to convene the National Security Council to discuss the Philippines' position. *(See box on this page.)*

"When the President deems that the war in Iraq is already imminent, she will convene the [NSC], which includes congressional leaders and members of the Cabinet. That is the understanding that we have with Congress," he said. *Reports from AP, Martin P. Marfil, Cynthia D. Balana, Carlito Pablo, Juliet Labog-Javellana and Norman Bordadora*

GMA to convene security council

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo will convene the National Security Council on Friday to take up the Philippines' position on the crisis in Iraq, her spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said yesterday.

Bunye said former Presidents Corazon Aquino and Fidel Ramos as well as representatives of Congress and the private sector had been invited.

Asked whether Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr. would attend the meeting, Bunye said: "We will know on the day itself."

Guingona has taken a strong position against US military action against Iraq without a United Nations resolution. *Carlito Pablo*

Iraq warned: It's 5 minutes to midnight

From page A1

had links to al-Qaida and dared the United States to prove his regime had weapons of mass-destruction.

With at least two-thirds of the Security Council skeptical of the Bush administration's policy toward Iraq, US Secretary of State Colin Powell on Wednesday faced a tough challenge in building a case for forcibly disarming Baghdad if it did not comply with UN resolutions.

Blix said Baghdad should take seriously US warnings that the diplomatic window was closing and the prospect of military action was looming.

In anticipation of the evidence Powell is expected to unveil, Blix said he saw no proof that any information was being leaked to the Iraqis about inspection sites, and no evidence that Iraq was moving banned material to escape inspectors.

"We have not seen any signs of things being moved around, whether tracks in the sand or in the ground," he said in an MSNBC interview. Inspectors have also taken samples at many sites, and those analyzed so far do not indicate that any illegal weapons had been moved, he added.

Despite US claims that Iraq had mobile labs to produce biological weapons, Blix said, "we have never found one." He said inspectors checked two mobile labs that Iraq had declared were being used to test food, and they found no evidence Iraq was using them for biological weapons.

Blix said he had seen no evidence to support US assertions that weapons and scientists were being smuggled out of Iraq and was "doubtful" about claims that Iraqi intelligence agents were posing as scientists.

As for Iraq's purported links to al-Qaida, Blix said, "I see skepticism about this. As a lawyer and the chief inspector, I'd like to see evidence, but I have not seen any evidence that shows this."

Nonetheless, he said, Iraq must do much more very quickly to present any information about banned weapons programs. And if it doesn't have any—as Baghdad claims—it must present "credible evidence for their absence."

"I'm pleading for Iraq to enter cooperation on substance," he said.

Nuclear inspection chief Mohamed ElBaradei, who will be heading to Baghdad with Blix for talks with Iraqi officials this weekend, said the United Nations wanted "quick progress and drastic change" from Iraq in providing evidence about its chemical and biological weapons.

Blix said there was no indication that the Iraqi government was prepared to provide the critical information that he and ElBaradei wanted to see ahead of their Feb. 14 report to the Security Council.

Germany's UN Ambassador Gunter Pleuger, the current council president, said that report would be "very important" in the council's determination of whether inspections were successful or whether there was a new "material breech," or violation—a determination likely to trigger military action.

Saddam

In the interview with retired anti-war British lawmaker Tony Benn, Saddam Hussein said the "weapons (of mass destruction) do not come in small pills that you can hide in your pocket."

"These are weapons of mass destruction, and it is easy to work out if Iraq has them or not," the Iraqi leader told Benn, a former British minister who traveled to Baghdad in a bid to try to stop a war. Benn is an outspoken pacifist who has been strongly critical of Prime Minister Tony Blair's support for action against Iraq.

Sitting on a gilded chair beside a white, black and red Iraqi flag with green stars, Saddam sipped coffee and spoke calmly as he also rejected any connection to al-Qaida.

"If we had a relationship with al-Qaida, and we believed in that relationship, we wouldn't be ashamed to admit it," he said.

The interview was taped in Baghdad on Sunday and broadcast around the world in an attempt to present the Iraqi case before Powell's appearance before a skeptical Security Council.

After hundreds of inspections since November, UN arms controllers have yet to find a major violation of the UN ban on Iraqi chemical, biological or nuclear weapons. The UN resolutions were adopted after Iraq's defeat by a US-led coalition in the 1991 Gulf War.

Saddam said the United States had no right to act alone and should work with other nations to solve international problems.

Photos, phone intercepts

Powell, accompanied by top CIA officials, was expected to present to the Security Council photographs and phone intercepts culled from classified material, but US officials said there would not be the "smoking gun" that some council members were demanding.

Last week, 11 of the 15 council members said they favored continued inspections and efforts to disarm Iraq peacefully—not a rush to war as the Bush administration seemed to be pushing.

Despite critical reports from top UN weapons inspectors and US President George W. Bush's State of the Union address, only Bulgaria and Spain supported the United States and Britain in warning that time was quickly running out for Iraq to disarm peacefully.

Calling for continued inspections were France, Russia and China, which all have veto power, as well as Germany, Mexico, Chile, Guinea, Cameroon, Syria, Angola and Pakistan.

US officials said Powell would present new evidence of Iraq's weapons programs and links to al-Qaida and other terrorist groups to bolster Washington's contention that Baghdad was hiding banned material and wasn't serious about cooperating with UN inspectors.

Powell called the evidence against Iraq "compelling," but the United States still faced an uphill struggle to sway the council.

Russia's UN Ambassador Sergey Lavrov, whose country is Iraq's most important council ally, has reiterated several times that Moscow wants "undeniable proof," and "not suspicions," that Baghdad is continuing its programs to build weapons of mass destruction.

After meeting with Blair on Tuesday, French President Jacques Chirac said that he would not join what the United States had called a "coalition of the willing" ready for a swift military attack on Iraq.

"We must let the inspectors do their jobs," Chirac said, calmly appealing for patience.

Despite the continued opposition to the US position from many council members, Powell's decision to come to the council was welcomed by all members. Reflecting its importance, 11 countries decided to send their foreign ministers to hear his presentation. Only Syria, Angola and Guinea will be represented by their UN ambassadors.

The United States has asked for 90 minutes for Powell to make his case, though his presentation could be shorter. The 14 other council members will then get to speak.

Germany's UN Ambassador Gunter Pleuger, the current council president, has set a six- to eight-minute time limit for each council member. Iraq's UN Ambassador Mohammed Al-Douri will then wrap up the open council meeting. *AP*

New Palace team takes charge, edges out Dante Ang

From page A1

nani Braganza, may be headed for a head-on collision with another group identified with Ang.

Members

Aside from Braganza and Bunye, the members of the "informal" communication group are Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, Presidential Chief of Staff Rigoberto Tiglao, Presidential Legal Counsel Avelino Cruz, Presidential Adviser for Ecclesiastical and Media Affairs Conrado Limcaoco.

There's more: Public relations practitioners Anthony Abaya and Bubot Quicho, former Trade Undersecretary Tomas Alcantara, Palace resident pollster Jun Laylo, and former Health Undersecretary Mario Taguiwalo.

Braganza also appointed Press Undersecretaries Milton Alingod, former executive of GMA-7, and Heraclio Celestino Nazareno, a former INQUIRER reporter.

The core people of this group are Abaya, Quicho and Alcantara, a Palace source told the INQUIRER.

Abaya is the husband of Anabelle Abaya, former spokesperson of then President Fidel Ramos. He reportedly has close ties with Ms Macapagal's brother, Diosdado Macapagal Jr.

Quicho is a businessman who specializes in communications strategy. He helped in the failed 1998 presidential campaign of Renato de Villa, and has been known as an "informal adviser" to Ms Macapagal.

Alcantara, who served as trade undersecretary during the Ramos administration, is personally close to the First Couple.

What about Ang!

Asked about Ang, Bunye said that the publicist would be "tapped on a case to case basis."

Another source noted that while Ang is no longer part of the President's communications team, "he still has men who are in charge of implementing portions of whatever communications plan will be implemented."

These include the network of Press Undersecretary Roberto Capco, and appointees in the government-controlled Journal group of publications and the government-sequestered IBC-13 television network.

Bunye said that the new group was formed after the President's speech on Dec. 30, when she renounced any intentions to run for election in 2004.

"The idea is that with the announcement of the President that she is not running, we have to refocus our communications plan," he said. "And the communication plan will revolve around rallying support for the President's reform agenda."

Disappointing results

According to INQUIRER sources inside the Palace, the new team started to take shape after the disappointing results of Ang's media campaign for Ms Macapagal which consisted mainly of expensive multi-media ads.

Popularity surveys commissioned by Malacañang had shown that the ad campaigns initiated by Ang were "ineffective," said the sources.

"Dante Ang put her in a tight spot," said the source.

The new team's main objective, according to the sources, was to "project the President as a serious consensus builder."

"She just wants to be remembered in the best way possible," said the source. "Everything (that the new communications team does) revolves around that."

The entry of Braganza, said the sources, completed the reorganization of the President's image-building team and once more put on solid ground personalities identified with former President Fidel Ramos, like Limcaoco and Abaya. Braganza himself is a nephew of the former President.

Weakens Ang's group

But the Braganza's bloc's emergence has considerably weakened the influence of the Ang group in the Palace. Late last year, Ang resigned all his government positions—presidential consultant on public relations and chair of the sequestered TV network IBC-13. "To protect the President," Ang said was his reason for leaving government following revelations of his purchase of a bank, which he confirmed, and in the wake of other controversies hounding him.

As a result, Palace officials who are identified with him are likely to feel the heat. Some of the officials identified with Ang who are likely to be shown the door are the highly paid appointees of Malacañang in the sequestered media firms like television station IBC-13, the Philippine Journal Inc. that publishes the tabloids People's Journal and People's Tonight.

These officials had been kept out of the new communications team which reports directly to the President.

One of the officials who quickly lost his grip on power just as Ang was losing his was Press Undersecretary Roberto Capco.

Capco refused to comment. Capco was taken out of the Office of the Press Secretary to become the deputy of Rigoberto Tiglao, Ms Macapagal's former spokesperson who was appointed chief of staff.

2 hostile women

A congressman privy to affairs in the Palace said another factor that helped weaken Ang's hold on power was the hostile attitude of two influential women in the Palace: Marita Jimenes and Vicky Garchitorena.

"Before, the President consulted him very often. She called him on the phone every time," the congressman said. "Now, I think his access has been reduced."

But then again, alliances that date back more than a decade die hard. The sources also said Ang is still in the power loop. It was reported that he recently went to Australia on a mission for President Macapagal.

"They still have breakfast once in a while," said one source.

Ex-Fide chief to appeal case

By Volt Contreras

THE SANDIGANBAYAN has meted out a 22-month jail term to Florencio Campomanes, former president of the International Chess Federation, for his alleged failure to make an accounting of P12.8 million paid by the government to the world chess body during the 1992 Chess Olympiad in Manila.

But Campomanes said he would file a motion for reconsideration and expressed confidence he would be exonerated, saying the amount was a fee to the federation, better known by its French acronym FIDE, for organizing the biennial chess event in Manila. He said he received the funds on behalf of FIDE and that the chess body had issued corresponding receipts.

The anti-graft court acquitted former Philippine Sports Commission chair Cecilio Hechanova in the 1997 case initiated by then Ombudsman Aniano Desierto based on the column of Campomanes' arch-critic, the late Arturo Borjal.

Campomanes had sued Borjal for libel and won, but he settled for an apology issued later by the late columnist. The Ombudsman case, however, proceeded and outlived the columnist.

The case stood on findings by the Commission on Audit that Campomanes failed to produce official receipts for the P12.8 million grant from the PSC for the chess tournament, which ran in Manila from June 6 to 25, 1992.

Campomanes accomplished "no liquidation" of the funds in behalf of FIDE, the court ruling said, quoting COA auditor Rexy Ramoz, the lone witness for the prosecution.

But Campomanes said since 1956, FIDE was never made to account for the funds granted by governments hosting the Chess Olympiad. In fact, he said, it was the other way around. He added that the agreement to award the right to host the event to the Philippines did not require FIDE to liquidate the funds.

He said he was informed that the FIDE was required to liquidate the funds only two years after the event.

The court ruled that Campomanes being the head of a private entity like FIDE did not exempt him from COA requirements since he still was entrusted "a national fund" from PSC.

In acquitting Hechanova, the court said the prosecution failed to establish a "conspiracy" between him and Campomanes.

Prosecutors had built the case around an alleged conspiracy between Campomanes and PSC officials led by Hechanova.

"How can you convict one of a crime in a conspiracy when the principal accused (Hechanova) was not guilty?" Campomanes said.

While Campomanes said the crime and sentence were very light, he said he would file a motion for reconsideration and that he was determined to clear his name.

PAGUNSAN watches his tee shot.
ROGER MARGALLO

Pagunsan leads by 3

By Jong Arcano

IT WAS a day when the field literally kept their fingers crossed-- on the putter, that is--and Rey Pagunsan did it well enough to stay on top.

Pagunsan carded a one-under-par 71 to pad his lead to three strokes after the second of the First Gentleman's Professional Golf Circuit 10th leg at the Tagaytay Midlands course.

Pagunsan, 34, survived a bogey-double bogey hiccup at the start of his backside trip to submit one of only six under-par cards in the round as the steady showers that went with the gusts not to mention the putting puzzle sent the average scoring to the mid 70s.

The cut-off score of 158, 14 over par, was the highest so far in the revived tour put up by First Gentleman Mike Arroyo and San Miguel Beer and organized by the Federation of Golf Clubs Phils. Inc. WG&A Super Ferry is the official carrier.

Pagunsan's 138 aggregate for 36 holes put him three shots ahead of Benjie Magada, who like Cassius Casas and Mars Pucay is chasing to become the first player to win three legs this season.

Magada, playing alongside Pagunsan, himself carded a 71 stained by a wet double-bogey on the fifth.

Ramil Bisera birdied three of his last four holes for the best score of the day, a three-under 69, that boosted him into a tie for third with Casas who shot 71. Both were six shots back at 144, one ahead of Richard Sinfuego who had a 72.

Ruben Sasutil, who was two back of Pagunsan before he teed off, found himself now trailing by eight after a 77 got him to 146 in the company of rookie pro Cookie LaO(73), Antonio Lascuna (71) and Ronald Pactolerin (70).

Pagunsan feels that ultimately, the battle will be won on the greens.

"Magkakatalo na lang talaga sa putting ito. Sobrang hirap basahin ang greens. Pero importante din pag-aralan ang pin placements dahil kahit maiksi ang par-putt mo, kailangan pa rin ang malaking break," said Pagunsan, who missed the second green and three-putted for a double-bogey mishap.

Davidoff Tour campaigner Danny Zarate and Rodrigo Cuello both carded 74s to tow the 148 group which included Rey Alit and Roger Cabajar, who both had 77s.

Pucay failed to recover from a so-so start as he struggled with a 75 to be at 149 with Lito Rempojo (74) and Noli Kempis (75).

Pagunsan, seeking to end a two-year title drought after winning the MRT-Southwoods Open in 2001, appeared headed for another explosive round when he hit the turn at two under behind easy birdies on the16th and 18th.

BLAST. FROM THE PAST

TODAY in 1992, Manila beat Rasht (Iran), 3-1, to place third in the Asian Cities Chess Team championship at the International Trade Center in Dubai.

NBA All-Star Game live on Solar Feb. 10

TIENG

THE PHILIPPINES, through Solar Sports, will join over 200 other countries across the world in airing the NBA's annual midseason classic, the NBA All-Star Game, on Feb. 10.

In a move aimed at "bringing the NBA closer to Filipinos," Solar Sports will send a veteran television crew to broadcast the game and other NBA All-Star Weekend festivities live from the Philipps Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Commentators Andy Jao and Chino Trinidad will cover the proceedings for Solar Sports, which will air the NBA All-Star Game live on Feb. 10 at 9 a.m. on IBC-13, with a replay at 7 p.m.

"We are committed to bringing the NBA games to Filipinos for the long haul," said Solar president William Tieng. Tieng added that Solar will soon be airing a weekly 30-minute localized version of the 'NBA Jam" program featuring Filipino hosts.

Solar's telecast of All-Star Weekend festivities begins on Feb. 9 from 7-11 p.m. on IBC-13 with the NBA Rookie Challenge, Three-Point Shootout, Slam Dunk Competition and other skills contests.

Defending champion Peja Stojakovic of the Sacramento Kings leads a field of six in the three-point shootout that also includes Boston's Antoine Walker and Seattle's Bren Barry. Golden State's Jason Richardson returns to defend his slam dunk title against the likes of 2001 champion Desmond Mason of Seattle, Richard Jefferson of New Jersey and rookie sensation Amare Stoudemire of Phoenix.

The West starters are Kobe Bryant, Tim Duncan, Kevin Garnett, Yao Ming and Steve Francis, with reserves Shaquille O'Neal, Stephon Marbury, Shawn Marion, Steve Nash, Dirk Nowitzki, Gary Payton and Peja Stojakovic replacing the injured Chris Webber. The East starters include Tracy McGrady, Vince Carter, Allen Iverson, Jermaine O'Neal and Ben Wallace, with Michael Jordan, Jason Kidd, Paul Pierce, Antoine Walker Brad Miller, Zydrunas Ilgauskas and Jamal Mashburn as reserves.

COMPLETE RESULTS

Washington 93, Cleveland 84; Portland 96, Orlando 88; LA Lakers 97, Indiana 94; New York 105, LA Clippers 92; Toronto 98, Milwaukee 95; Minnesota 103, Houston 89; Sacramento 110, Dallas 109; Nuggets 102, Bulls 100.

Reuters

19th Mango Tee starts today

THE TANDEMS of Chito Recto-Abe Avena and OV Espiritu-Tommy Manotoc, last year's winners in the handicap and scratch play formats, seek for a rare repeat when the 19th edition of the Mango Tee, the member-guest invitational of the Alabang Country Club chiefly sponsored by Smart, blasts off today.

Recto and Avena are the defending overall champions while Espiritu and Manotoc are out to keep the low gross plum as they banner a full-packed roster of 256 teams vying for tournament and hole-in-one prizes with a combined value of at least P2.5 million.

The first batch of the huge field playing their morning round gets going at 6:15 a.m. in a shotgun tee-off while the afternoon batch is up next at 12:15 p.m. Participating teams will tee off either on Thursday-Saturday or Friday-Sunday.

Joining Smart as major sponsors are Mitsubishi Motors, Philippines, Inc., Taylor Made adidas, Makati Skyline, Standard Chartered Bank and Turf Company. Fedex, Pepsi Cola and Security Bank-Diners are the premium hole sponsors.

Hole sponsors are Nestle, Acro Industrial, BeneficialPNB Life Insurance, Citra, Cocolife/Direct Link, Directories Phils., Gainers Marketing, GG&A Club Shares, Inc., Golforce Inc., Green Cross, Inc., Golfers Clubshares, Inc., Haji Andi Tabusalla, Hyundai Ortigas, Joseph Rice Mill, Maisog Engineering, Natropin, Pilipinas Shell, Prudential Life, Supreme Construction, SRC, Tanduay, T&C Construction, The Bellevue Manila, WG&A and YKK Zipper Phils. with the special participation of Ciolo Mondo, Hanson So and Asian Imex.

Els eyes 4th JW crown

BEGINNINGS at Twenty Plus, Inc. in cooperation with Dream Broadcasting Network will bring to local viewers the exciting action in the 2003 Johnnie Walker Classic in Australia where the red-hot Ernie Els will be seeking a fourth win in five starts this season.

The live coverage of Els' historic bid against the best of Europe will be carried by the Dream Channel on Feb. 13-14 from 2-6 p.m. and on Feb. 15-16 from 12 noon to 4 p.m.

Local viewers will also be treated by Beginnings at Twenty Plus, Inc. with the same quality coverage with the delayed telecast on NBN Channel 4 daily from Feb. 13-16 from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

The Johnnie Walker Classic offering a prize money of $2.8 million and a champion's prize of $360,000 will feature Els' prominent rivals on the European Tour led by World Cup partner Retief Goosen, Sergio Garcia and Justin Rose.

The big-hitting John Daly is among the American entries in the event to be played at the Lake Karrinyup Country Club in Western Australia.

The Johnnie Walker Classic is part of a package of major sports events Beginnings at Twenty Plus is set to bring to local television this year. For inquiries, please call 759-340 or fax 750-8198.

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Lanao Palaro organizer off to Mecca

DIMAPORO

LANAO del Norte representative and sportsman Abdullah Dimaporo yesterday left the country to lead the biggest and final batch of Filipino Muslims making their annual pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia this year.

The lawmaker, who is at the helm of the preparation for the Palarong Pambansa slated in his province this year, was recently named ``amerul hajj" (chief pilgrim) by President Arroyo.

His task is to oversee the departures and arrivals of the estimated 3,000 pilgrims to and from Mecca, which is the heart of the Islam religion.

Dimaporo, who left on board Saudia Airlines flight SV 869, will stay in the Kingdom for 15 days attending to the needs of the pilgrims who are housed in a facility near Mecca rented by the Philippine government.

``He (Dimaporo) will be the official representative of the Philippine government," said Solaiman Mutia, deputy executive director of the Office of Muslim Affairs. ``Our Muslim brothers have started going to Mecca since Jan. 15. This is one of the five pillars of Islam."

Mutia added that Dimaporo is also set to give to Saudi's King Fahd a personal letter from Ms Arroyo and a gift from our country.

Dimaporo, along with his wife Lanao del Norte Gov. Imelda Quibranza-Dimaporo, is trying to push the province and the entire Mindanao region into the national scene with the staging of the Palaro at the world-class Mindanao Civic Center.

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Ormoc hosts 5-cock tilt

THE COUNTRY'S finest cockers and game fowl breeders converge at the Valencia Sports Center in Barangay Valencia, Ormoc City today as the Codillas stage one of the biggest and most prestigious cockfighting events of the year.

Dubbed the "5-Cock Fiesta Derby," the event is slated for Feb. 6, 7 and 8 and stakes a guaranteed cash prize of P2 million or more with an open betting format.

Elmer Codilla acts as the promoter backed by Cong. Dodong Codilla and engineer Eric Codilla.

Highlight of the derby is the launcing of Thunderbird Platinum, Thunderbird's newest product, to be conducted by a delegation led by Marketing Director Edwin Mapanao.

Tonight's tussle will parade no less than 80 matches.

Also set for tonight is the finals of the Roligon Mega Cockpit 13th Anniversary 5-Cock Derby with 110 matches starting at 5 p.m.

(In exact order)

FOUR DIGIT
9 8 6 5

SUERTRES
0 3 6

MEGALOTTO 6/45
13 17 22 23 25 36

Sampras unsure of future

SAN JOSE, California--US Open champion Pete Sampras pulled out of next week's tournament in San Jose, his first of the year, because he is still unsure of his future, a tournament organizer said on Tuesday. Tournament chairman Barry MacKay said after speaking to Sampras and his coach Paul Annacone on Monday, he felt one of the reasons why Sampras withdrew was because the 14-times grand slam champion was still considering his future. AP

E-mail: pr_sports@inquirer.com.ph
SPORTS
Editor **Al S. Mendoza** ◎ Assistant Editor **Edwin M. Villanueva**

USOC president resigns

DENVER--Marty Mankamyer resigned as president of the US Olympic Committee on Tuesday, succumbing to pressure from colleagues who blamed her for infighting that fractured the world's most powerful Olympic organization. Mankamyer, the USOC's highest-ranking volunteer, submitted her resignation via e-mail to members of the organization's executive committee. AP

SOUTHERN LADIES TILT

Chua, Roberto show way in Cebu

CEBU CITY--Heidi Chua, aiming for a rare three straight victory in as many starts, led the first round yesterday in a tie with Lora Roberto in the Southern Ladies Open at the Cebu Country Club here.

The 26-year-old Chua arrested a bogey-bogey start with a birdie on three to keep her poise intact in her bid to add the tournament to her victories in the Philippine Ladies Open and the DHL-NGAP Open last month.

"It was windy out there today but that really didn't hurt me much," said Chua, Wack Wack's mainstay. "What hurt were several three-putt miscues."

Chua, the winner of this tournament in 2000 and 2001, shot a 3-over-par 75 like Roberto, a Southwoods bet who held her own against the gale-force like winds that hit this exclusive club almost day-long.

The leaders totaled 51 points on the Molave scoring system that gives 4 points to a birdie, 3 to a par, 2 to a bogey and 1 to a double bogey in the tournament sponsored by PAL, the Philippine Sports Commission, DHL Worldwide Express/WWW Express, Marriott Hotel-Cebu, Petron, San Miguel Corporation, Smart Communications, Mitsubishi Motors, Mizuno, Hans Brumann, WG&A Super Ferry, Directories Philippines, Nike, Hidden Spring, Perrier and Gopez Corporation.

"Now I can heave a sigh of relief," said Alice Ll. Andrada of the organizing National Golf Association of the Philippines that is staging the Ruby Celebration of the country's oldest golf event for lady amateurs. "The tournament is on and I hope the weather holds up to Friday's conclusion of the event."

Defending champion Lina de Guzman grappled with an erratic driver and stumbled to a 78 in a deadlock with fellow Canlubang teammate Lucy Landicho.

"My tee shots were almost out of control," said De Guzman, who double bogeyed No. 18 on a pulled tee shot and needed to play out of the bushes.

She was at 48 points like Landicho, just 3 points behind Chua and Roberto.

Carmelette Villaroman was at 79 (47 points), her round dotted with 4 bogeys on the first five holes. She was tied with Eva Miñoza, the younger sister of the legendary Frankie Miñoza representing Del Monte of Bukidnon.

Completing the cast of the Championship Division are Stephanie Yu 83, Tracy Locsin 84 and Korean Hye Jung Kim 89 in the 54-hole event that has attracted 14 clubs nationwide. *ASM*

Other scorers:

Class A-Mercy Bejar (Cebu) 44, Mian Tabanas (Del Monte) 42, Malta Lustre (Negros) 39, Alessandra Cordero (Cebu CC) 39.

Class B-Rachel burlas (Mactan) 40, Johanne Reyes (Negros) 38, Gena Tongkopanon (Mactan) 38, Hilda Badong (Navy) 36, Yoko Suzuki (Cebu CC) 36.

Class C-Alice Ll. Andrada (Alabang) 32 points, Jeanette Chin (Club Filipino) 32, Gloria Domingo (Phi. Navy) 30, Anna Roa (Pueblo de Oro) 30.

Class D-Remy Perez (Club Fil) 27, Rosemarie Mendoza (Iligan) 25, Emma Bayer (Club Fil) 24, Mariko Ikehata (Mactan).

PSC Chair Eric Buhain (right) hits the ceremonial tee-off. JUNJIE MENDOZA

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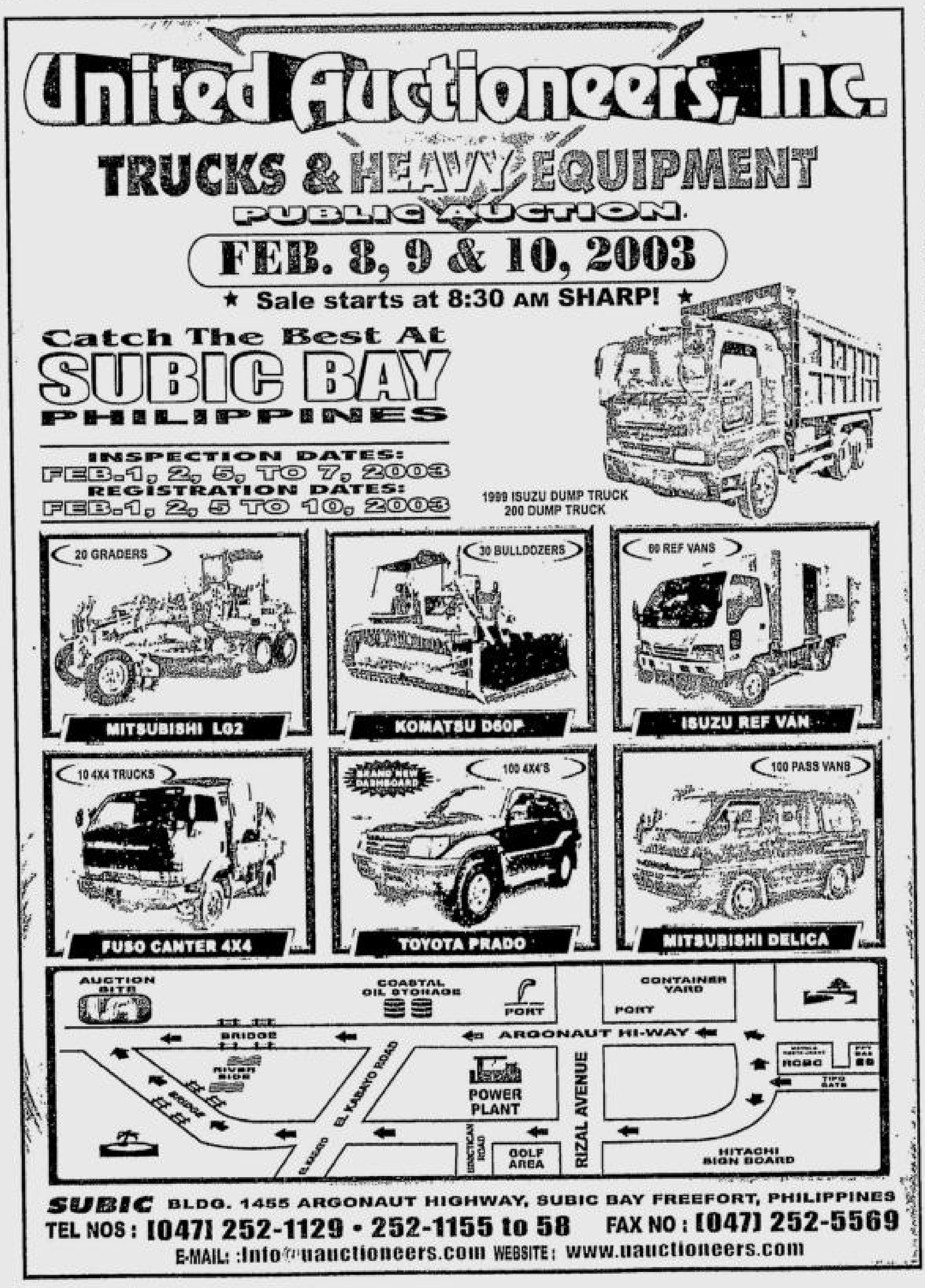

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Open chess slated

NATIONAL Capital Region schools will comprise the bulk of participants, even as Ateneo de Manila, La Immaculada Concepcion High School of Pasig City and Lourdes School of Mandaluyong will field two teams each in the upcoming High School Chess Team Open tournament on Feb. 7-9 at the multi-purpose gym of the Philippine Science High School along Agham Road, Diliman, Quezon City.

This materialized after NCR DepEd director Corazon Santiago endorsed the event and Schools Division Superintendent Victoria Fuentes issued a memo to public schools to join this pioneering event organized by the Active Chess Center of Asia Inc. (Acca) in cooperation with the PSHS, and sanctioned by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines.

Sponsors include Land Bank of the Philippines, Philam Foundation, Tabilog Cargo Services, Glutaphos, ECC Graphics and Belgosa Media Systems.

Deadline for registration has been extended until Feb. 6.

Tita Mids

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

SOME people just love to waste their lives. They lose all hope when someone dear to them is gone. They welcome loneliness like rose welcomes rain in summer. Sooner than expected, they'd fall ill. And, in no time, they'd be dead.

This world is cruel–that is, if you allow it to be cruel. Happiness, like sadness, is by choice.

Others love to waste their money. They inherit a fortune and next go on splurging in a no-more-tomorrow attitude. Sooner than expected, they'd go bankrupt. And, in no time, they'd end up beggars.

This world is a joke–that is, if you allow it to be a clown.

Laughter, like tears, is by choice.

I recently met a lady bubbling with life. She has my mother's name (Remedios). She has many nicknames, but Mids is my favorite. I call her Tita Mids.

When it's almost customary for most women to hide their age, Tita Mids takes pride in revealing it. She is 77, but she doesn't look it. She looks late fifty-ish.

Any secrets? Beauty secrets, maybe?

"I do three things during the week," Tita Mids said. "I dance, I play mahjongg, I listen to music."

She goes ballroom dancing twice a week, plays mahjongg three times a week, and listens to Frank Sinatra, Glenn Miller and mostly Tommy Dorsey every day of the week.

"Dancing makes me physically fit and I feel light as a feather the morning after," said Tita Mids. "Mahjongg keeps me close to my friends and music tremendously soothes my mind."

She's chauffeur-driven when she boards her white Toyota Rav-4 on her way to ballroom dancing; a female chaperone sits on a table by her lonesome, a can of Royal Tru-Orange in hand while waiting for the boss to dance the night away.

Tita Mids eats practically everything--"a little of everything" is the key. She likes lechon.

"Oh, the rib part of it is the best," said Tita Mids, who eats lechon by dipping strips of it in white vinegar awash in crushed garlic, kamayan style.

While mahjongg helps keep her motor brain in shape, it's the crossword puzzle that keeps Tita Mids' mind extra sharp.

"I've been doing the puzzle every morning since I was small," she said.

Tallish with quite an imposing figure and strong features, Tita Mids comes from the Lluch family in Iligan. A painting of her mother (Lluch) done by Amorsolo hangs in her sala.

"I treasure this as much as I treasure the memory of my mother," she said. "Some collectors had tried buying it many times already but always, my ready answer was, there's no price available for it–now and forever."

Tita Mids lives her life well and we ought to learn a thing or two from her.

Ucap finals tonight

A WIDE-open contest is predicted tonight in Mandaluyong Coliseum's "43rd UCAP Bumble Bee Balbina/Pandor Magic 7-Cock Derby" finals.

Sponsors are Sagupaan Hammer Dewormer, Sagupaan Complexor 3000, Sagupaan Mite Free Shampoo and Washout Shampoo.

The current leaders with three points each are UCAP president Raymond Velayo and Butch Halili (Arnis Master II) and engineer Sonny Lagon (JT JBB Blue Blade), while with 2.5 points are Wacky Salud of Cebu (Mactan Casino Apr. 11), John Capinpin of Negros J-Cap Mad AT RBA I) and Velayo/Halili (Arnis Master I).

Closely pursuing the leaders are Mauro Prieto (ANITO), Blandy Tolentino (San Pablo Heat), Dave Paras/Danding Cojuangco (Bumble Bee Balbina), Tos and Charlie Reyes (CJR Nevada Balbina) and OPMI president Vic Yu/ Walter Villanueva (King Boxer II) who have two points each.

For other details, please call 531-4003, 531-4005, 535-2341 and 534-4110.

Roligon lines up 78 fights

ROLIGON Mega Cockpit's "13th" Anniversary 5-Cock Derby" championship round is set at 5 p.m. today with 78 fights on tap.

Hosted by Rolly Ligon and supported by Thunderbird Platinum High Protein Conditioning Pellets and Ninja Gamefowl Feeds, the derby attracted 83 entries last Tuesday.

Late participants from the provinces will field five cocks today.

Aside from the guaranteed cash prize at stake, the champion with the fastest winning time gets a brand-new motorcycle or its equivalent of P50,000.

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Editor **Louie C. Camino**

'Traffic getting worse'

"IN the end, it's the public at large that will suffer the most because traffic is getting worse by the day," according to a Fejodap official.

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Big strikes set in support of color-coding

By Christian Esguerra
and Leila Salaverria

THE SUSPENSION of the Unified Vehicular Volume Reduction Program is taking its toll on commuters and public utility drivers in Metro Manila.

As a result, major transport groups yesterday announced that they are set to stage a massive strike to pressure Bayani Fernando, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority chair, into lifting the three-week suspension of the traffic scheme.

The Federation of Jeepney Operators and Drivers Associations of the Philippines (Fejodap) said that the three-week ban of the UVVRP, or "color-coding" traffic scheme, has made things worse for utility drivers.

Fejodap President Zenaida Maranan said their drivers have been losing at least P240 in daily income since the ban started last Monday.

"The ban only encouraged (utility) drivers to cut trips to avoid congested areas," Maranan said. "In the end, it's the public at large that will suffer the most because traffic is getting worse by the day, she said.

Brickbats

From an average daily trip of eight, jeepney drivers now get to ply their routes only five times a day because of the heavy traffic caused by the the color-coding ban, she added.

But Fernando yesterday merely shrugged off the brickbats thrown at the color-coding ban.

"At this point, no one can say if the (UVVRP) suspension works or not," Fernando said. "Unless you fly in a helicopter over Metro Manila everyday and observe traffic, your comments won't be conclusive.

"If you commute or drive to work everyday on the same route and get stuck in traffic, you can't say there are traffic jams all over Metro Manila."

Fernando also gave the assurance that throughout the suspension, the MMDA would be conducting a traffic count and would be constantly monitoring vehicular flow through its 36 traffic cameras. This way, the MMDA could conclusively know whether the scheme should again be implemented.

According to Fejodap's Maranan, she was scheduled to meet with Fernando next week to air Fejodap's concerns about the color-coding suspension. Should Fernando fail to address the problems, Fejodap and other jeepney organizations would hold a transport strike, Maranan said.

Strike

Claire dela Fuente, president of the Integrated Metro Bus Operators Association (Imboa), yesterday said bus organizations were also planning to stage a strike to denounce Fernando's plan to implement the "odd-even" traffic scheme among buses.

"I hope he's not serious about it," she said. "Just imagine buses plying their routes only three times in a week. We will lose half of our income and we might be forced to lay off half of our employees in the process."

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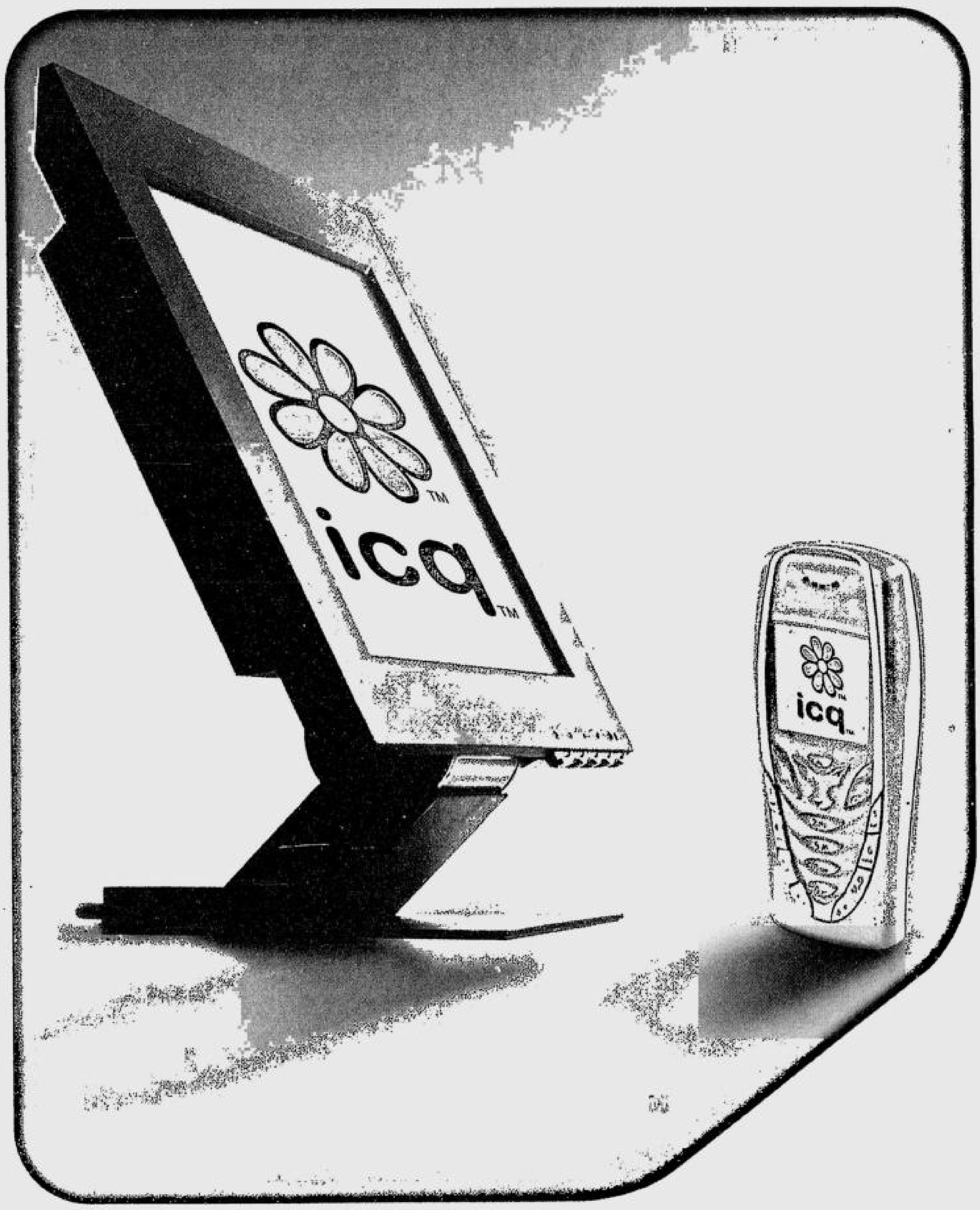
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The undisciplined PNP

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

HOW undisciplined are policemen nowadays?

The answer to that is a report about a Quezon City traffic policeman, a mere SPO2 punching a station commander with the rank of superintendent (lieutenant colonel in the military).

SPO2 Hilario Oralla, 42, assigned at the Central Police District's Traffic Enforcement Group, hit in the face Supt. Jolly Dizon, CPD Station 5 commander in Lagro while he was being investigated for making trouble in his neighborhood. Oralla was drunk at the time.

Such incident is not isolated. It's common within the Philippine National Police (PNP).

* * *

In the military, it's unthinkable for an enlisted person (private to master sergeant) to hit an officer (lieutenant to four-star general).

Disobeying orders or fighting an officer is a serious offense in the military. In the battlefield, a soldier who disobeys orders or hits an officer can be shot on the spot.

That's why incidents like the one mentioned above are very rare in the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

* * *

Why is there a big gap between the discipline in the AFP and that in the PNP?

Because the PNP has become "civilianized" as a result of the merger of the Philippine Constabulary (PC) and Integrated National Police (INP). The PC was a military organization, a branch of service of the AFP, while the INP, although a civilian organization, was headed by the PC chief in a concurrent capacity.

Since the PC dominated over the INP, there was military discipline within the PC-INP "marriage."

* * *

The formation of the PNP was mandated by the 1987 Constitution, also known as the "Cory Aquino Constitution."

When Ms Aquino took over from Ferdinand Marcos, she sought the abolition of the historic PC, formed by the Americans as the country's national police at the turn of the century.

Ms Aquino hated the PC like the plague because some of its members arrested her husband, Sen. Benigno Aquino, minutes after Marcos declared martial law in Sept. 21, 1972.

* * *

Cory had her revenge on the PC through its abolition and replacement by the PNP,

that the PNP would be "civilian in character and national in scope."

The "civilian in character" phrase is the clincher to an undisciplined organization.

* * *

Since they're a civilian uniformed organization, members of the PNP are no longer subject to the articles of war that military personnel are subject to.

Because of the civilian nature of the PNP, its members are already subject to civil service rules. No longer will a policeman being complained of by a civilian for, say, abusing his authority, be ordered arrested by his superior officers.

Also because of the civilian character of the PNP, the rank distinction is gone. Non-officers can disobey lawful orders from superiors without fear of being arrested and jailed on the spot. Complaints of insubordination will go through the time-consuming procedure called "due process."

It's different in the military. An officer can have a subordinate arrested and jailed on the spot for disobedience to lawful orders.

* * *

I was a police reporter during the PC-INP years and I can you tell you policemen in those days were much more disciplined than they are now under the PNP set-up. Comparing the discipline of the policemen of yesteryears to the present crop is like putting the Toyota Land Cruiser beside the jeepney.

I've been witness to the indiscipline of the present crop of policemen.

A policeman who is summoned to his office by a superior for a confrontation with a complainant can disregard the summons. He will invoke his constitutional right to due process and the superior can't do anything about it.

* * *

I have brought before superior officers and agencies like the National Police Commission (Napolcom) complaints of ordinary citizens against policemen.

In many cases, cops summoned to face their accusers before superiors or the police bodies like the Napolcom do not appear.

"We can't do anything if they don't show up. They have rights," a Napolcom hearing officer said.

* * *

In the PC-INP years, cops or constables (as PC soldiers were called) who disregarded the summons of superiors faced arrest or on-the-spot dismissal.

In fact, there were jails for recalcitrant cops or PC soldiers in the old days.

There are no more jails for PNP members who are abusive. If they are charged administratively the cases drag on for years.

* * *

A couple of days ago, I met again a student who came to us at "Isumbong mo kay Tulfo" three years ago after he was shot by drunken policemen in Fairview, Quezon City.

I asked him what happened to the administrative case that we helped him file against his cop-assailants with the PNP inspectorate in Camp Crame.

His answer was typical: "The case is still pending, Sir. One of the cops is now in the US."

The Philippine Constabulary was a paramilitary organization, its personnel steeped in military discipline. In fact, the Philippine Constabulary Academy was the precursor of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA).

MMDA operation in QC turns violent

By Clarice Colting

THE THREAT to utilize kerosine against sidewalk vendors did not push through and a clearing operation turned violent yesterday morning at the Philcoa area in Quezon City.

A cartload of oranges and other wares were left scattered on the ground as some 50 Metro Manila Development Authority operatives cleared the sidewalk in front of the Quezon City Hall.

Some vendors sustained scratches and bruises due to the confrontation.

One vendor, who begged not to be named, said MMDA operatives scattered her cartload of oranges even as she pleaded that the money from her sales were still in the cart.

Minutes later, another batch of MMDA operatives arrived, bearing steel pipes and long sticks. The angry vendors started to throw some of the scattered and already damaged fruits at the operatives.

A chase ensued with the MMDA operatives, bearing pipes and sticks, going after the vendors.

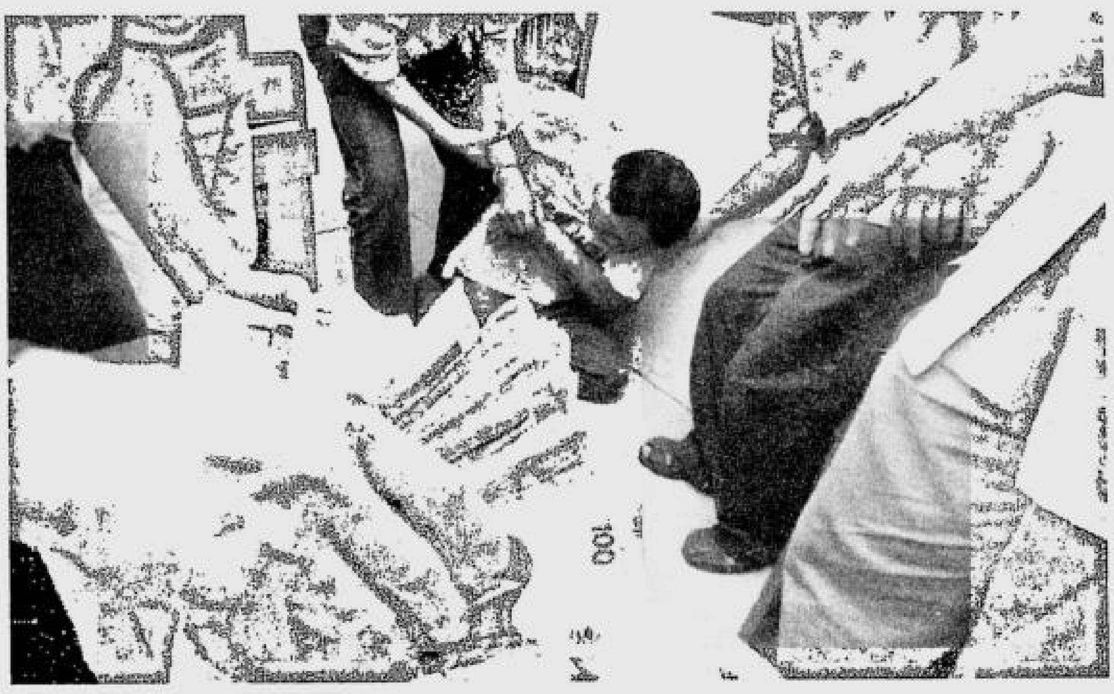
Another vendor said they have been negotiating with the MMDA operatives in the area for a long time.

"*Wala namang ibinibigay ang gobyerno na* alternative *sa mga* vendors, *ganito pa ang ginagawa nila* (The government does not give any alternative for the vendor, yet they are doing this to us)," she said.

The vendor claimed they were not obstructing the way and that they had neatly placed their goods at the sidewalk.

"*Dumating ang* MMDA. *Sila nga ang nagkakalat* (The MMDA arrived. They were the ones who did the littering)," she added.

Since the start of the sidewalk clearing by the MMDA under Bayani Fernando, vendors have been protesting the violent manner of the operations.



BLOOD MONEY

ROBBERY suspect Felipe Aguilar, 45, struggles with Manila policemen who arrested him for shooting and then robbing a businessman on Juan Luna Street in Tondo, Manila. The police recovered the entire amount—P853,600—from Aguilar.

RANDY HORMILLOSA

Policemen mum on Llamas bounty

By Christian Esguerra

HOW TRUE are reports that some law enforcement officials were waiting for a reward before they move in to arrest the alleged killer of Ateneo law graduate Jose Ramon Llamas.

No comment, ranking Pasay officers said yesterday.

A man involved in the month-old hunt for suspect Bashir Abdulrahman claimed on Tuesday that police and National Bureau of Investigation agents had already determined the whereabouts of Abdulrahman.

But some of them, claimed the informant, were waiting for the Llamas family to put up a reward before they arrest the Muslim trader.

The family on Tuesday announced a P750,000 bounty to encourage more people to join the Abdulrahman hunt.

The suspect has yet to be located despite combined efforts by the police, the NBI, alongside leaders of Muslim communities in Metro Manila, Pampanga, Cavite and Mindanao.

Pending the arrest, authorities filed the other day murder charges against Abdulrahman before the Pasay prosecutor's office.

At least five witnesses had identified Abdulrahman through pictures as the man who had shot and killed Llamas over a petty traffic feud on Taft Avenue in Pasay last month.

Was there murder at the belfry?

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE DECOMPOSING body of an unidentified man was found hanging inside the belfry of a Catholic Church in Sta. Ana, Manila yesterday morning.

But police refused to readily rule it as a suicide.

For one, police noted that the victim's feet reached the ground of the top floor of the Sta. Ana Church belfry at the corner of Pedro Gil and New Panaderos streets, said Detective Steve Casimiro, of the the Western Police District-homicide section.

Investigators likewise noted the absence of a cutter or pliers that was used to cut the electronic wire tied around the victim's neck, said Detective Edgardo Paterno.

"The cut was clean but there was no pliers there. The rest of the bundle of wire, which was used for the church repair, was found near the body. So what did he use to cut it?" Paterno asked.

The man was described as 35 years old, of medium built, six-feet tall, of regular hair, and wearing a white shirt with black stripes, and khaki shorts.

The cadaver was already decomposing and there were signs bats and birds had pecked on it.

Casimiro said the body must have been hanging for the past four to five days.

There was also no suicide note, he added.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, February 6, 2003
4th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading:	Heb 12:18-19, 21-24
Gospel:	Mk 6:7-13

Jesus called the Twelve to him and began to send them out two by two, giving them authority over evil spirits. And he ordered them to take nothing for the journey except a staff; no food, no bag, no money in their belts. They were to wear sandals and were not to take an extra tunic.

And he added, "In whatever house you are welcomed, stay there until you leave the place. If any place doesn't receive you and the people refuse to listen to you, leave after shaking the dust off your feet. It will be a testimony against them."

So they set out to proclaim that this was the time to repent. They drove out many demons and healed many sick people by anointing them.

Commentary

The apostles are sent by Jesus (it appears to be the first time on their own) to evangelize with authority to convert and deliver people from the demons that control them. The Lord takes advantage of this occasion to instruct them, at times in a detailed way that can seem excessive to us. But what do we have deep down in the pastoral instructions of Jesus? Basically, he wants to tell us that evangelization must be done freely, disengaged from everything else-possessions, persons, duties, etc.-that could prove to be an obstacle to the credibility of his mission.

Claretian Publications Inc., 8 Mayumi St., UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City, UP P.O. Box 4, Diliman, 1101 Quezon City; Tel.: 921-3984; Fax: 921-7429; E-mail: claret@cn1.net; Websites: http://www.bible.claret.org (Claretian Publications Inc.) & http://missionaries.claret.org (Claretians in the Philippines)

1 in East-West Bank rob falls; cops eye inside job

By Alcuin Papa

ONE suspect was arrested, the gang behind the East-West robbery in Quezon City has been identified but police were looking into the inside job angle in the case.

The Gonzales Robbery Gang, a breakaway group of the notorious Waray-Waray Gang, was singled as the group responsible for the heist.

Sr. Supt. Napoleon Castro, director of the Central Police District, told reporters yesterday that one of the suspects in the bank robbery, identified as Ruben Ricabar, was a member of the Gonzales Group.

Castro's men led by Sr. Insp. Rudy Jaraza of the CPD's Intelligence Unit arrested Ricabar on Monday along Chico Street, Cainta, Rizal.

Concerned citizens had tipped off his whereabouts to police. Ricabar has been positively identified by the bank's security guards and employees as one of the robbers.

Castro said that a bank guard pointed to Ricabar as the one who disarmed him during the heist.

Ricabar and five other suspects broke into the East-West Bank branch on Congressional Avenue on January 30 as the bank's automated teller machine was being loaded. The group reportedly walked away with P500,000.

"We have been watching this group for a long time because they have been responsible for robberies around Metro Manila as well as Rizal and Cavite. They laid low for a while until now," Castro said.

He added that investigators are set to question the security guards and their security agency. "We are still investigating the angle of an inside job because the suspects seemed like they knew when the ATM was being loaded with money. I expect they (guards and security agency) will cooperate."

The management of the East-West Bank assured the public that there has been no disruption in operations and it's business as usual in its Congressional Ave. branch.

Investigators had already questioned the driver of the FX vehicle which was used in the hold-up.

The driver claimed that armed men commandeered his vehicle and directed him to the bank. After the heist, he was allegedly left in a secluded area somewhere in Antipolo.

However, the driver has disappeared after being questioned by police. Investigators suspect he could be involved.

Police are conducting follow-up operations against the rest of the gang members.

METROBRIEFS

Stabbed

PEDICAB driver Ruel Y. Dela Cruz, 32, stabbed dead his relative and fellow driver Armando A. Mendoza, after they fought over a passenger in Tondo, Manila on Monday night. Dela Cruz, of F. Varona Street, Tondo, also sustained a cut when he allegedly killed Mendoza, 52, also of F. Varona Street, said Detective Raul Olavario of the Western Police District. Police said Mendoza was about to take on his regular passenger when he saw Dela Cruz approach the same passenger and convinced him to ride in his pedicab at around 8:30 p.m. on F. Varona Street. Upset, the victim confronted the suspect, until a fullblown fistfight ensued. Olavario said when the brawl ended, the victim's neighbors saw Mendoza slumped on the ground. He was taken to the Tondo Medical Center but he died while undergoing surgery. Meanwhile, Dela Cruz was taken to the Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center. The police now have him under guard in his hospital room, Olavario added. *Philip Tubeza*

Rescued

CALOOCAN policemen rescued over the weekend 16 women, four of whom are minors, from recruiters suspected to be members of a syndicate involved in the trafficking of women. The police have also warned the public to stay away from suspected illegal recruiters Conchita Quicho and Roger Mendez, respective owner and manager of Wings of Hope Placement Agency, with offices on Tamban Street, Kaunlaran Village, Caloocan. Quicho and Mendez remain at large. Police said that although a complaint has been filed against the suspects, which led to the victims' rescue, no formal charges have yet been lodged against the pair. Police said that the suspects have been recruiting girls from the provinces, luring them to Metro Manila by promising them high-paying jobs. But when they got here, the victims were forced to pay P50,000 in "damage fees" and compelled to work in nightclubs on Timog Avenue in Quezon City. Alarmed by the information, the victims' relatives trooped to the city police headquarters for assistance. On Saturday at around 12:30 p.m., Caloocan lawmen raided the agency and rescued the women. *Tina Santos*

Hacked

PEDICAB driver Antolin S. Malaki, 30, did not wake up from his sleep on Sunday afternoon. His neighbor, Alexander B. Fabilonia, hacked him to death. But minutes after Fabilonia allegedly committed the crime, he too was stabbed, but survived the attempt, said Detective Danilo Vidad, of the Western Police District. Police said Malaki, of Parola Compound, Tondo, Manila, decided to have a nap in his house at around noon on Sunday after he, Fabilonia and their relatives had a drinking session that morning. At around 2:30 p.m., the suspect approached the victim, and attacked him with a jungle bolo. According to witnesses, Malaki died on the spot with the bolo still embedded in his body. Fabilonia fled to Baseco Compound but an unidentified man stabbed him there. Fabilonia was taken to Gat Andres Bonifacio Hospital, where police have put him under guard. *Philip Tubeza*

The People's Champion! Is back!

Groups warn dads not to amend oil measure

By Jerome Aning

TWO GROUPS that are opposed to the oil depot in Pandacan have warned the Manila City Council not to amend the city ordinance phasing out the fuel facility.

The United Front to Oust the Oil Depot and the Social Justice Society said any alteration will be in contempt of their petition calling for the Supreme Court to force Mayor Lito Atienza to enforce the ordinance.

In a letter sent to the Council last Feb. 3, the SJS through its president, Samson Alcantara, said such action "could also be interpreted as a cover-up for official inaction or nonfeasance."

UFO-OD Convenor Vladimir Cabigao has also urged the councilors to "defy" oil firms and prioritize the safety of Pandacan residents.

Last week, the Council agreed to allow the oil firms to stay in Pandacan for three more months, to give the companies time to comply with the reduction agreement they reached with City Hall.

The Council bowed to Malacañang's warning that the closure of the depot would affect oil supply in Metro Manila and Luzon, especially with the looming war between Iraq and the United States.

The SJS said "the perceived temporary inconvenience that may be brought about by a war in Iraq is no reason for a legislative somersault."

The lawyers' group added that "such a contingency would heighten the risk of terrorist attacks in Metro Manila—with the Pandacan oil depot as the prime target."

"An attack will surely trigger a conflagration that will respect no buffer zones, causing the instantaneous death of thousands of residents, and the slow, painful death of thousands more," SJS said.

In a separate letter dated Feb. 2, the UFO-OD said the Middle East crisis even gives greater urgency to the immediate removal of the oil depot.

The Philippines is a US ally and is vulnerable to reprisals by terrorists, Cabigao said.

He reminded councilors that when they approved the phase-out of the depot, they themselves said that no facility is safe from terrorist attacks whatever conceivable and stringent security measures were undertaken.

Cabigao described the depot as "the right thing in the wrong place."

He said the oil depot "is obnoxious under the present circumstances but not when it would be placed in an area where public safety would not be compromised."

Ordinance No. 8027, passed in November 2001, converted the depot site from an industrial into a commercial area, effectively outlawing the operation of a fuel terminal.

New waste system presents fitting solution to Metro's garbage woes

By Leila Salaverria

A NEW waste disposal system doesn't emit harmful smoke, doesn't leave a toxic legacy and has been approved by the Department of. Environment and Natural Resources.

It may also well be a fitting solution to Metro Manila's garbage woes, according to Safeworld Foundation President Jose O. Sabio.

Safeworld is a non-government organization dedicated to environmental causes.

According to Sabio, the Genesyst System uses new technology from the United States that converts garbage into useful products—mainly ethanol—through a process called hydrolysis.

This is achieved with the Gravity Pressure Vessel (GPV), which uses heat, pressure and chemical processes to turn near-liquefied waste to ethanol or ethyl alcohol, which is a vital ingredient in many industries.

He said the technology, while using heat, does not burn the materials and is thus smoke-free. He added that the process ensures that no toxic residue is left.

In fact, said Sabio, the system is environment friendly, having gotten the DENR's approval.

The main component of the Genesyst Sytem is the GPV. It is a 2,000-foot long column drilled into the earth where the liquefied waste is poured down, and then comes up as glucose. The product is then mixed with other chemicals and made to undergo fermentation and distillation before producing ethanol. The column would be well-sealed to prevent the solution from seeping into the earth, said Sabio.

The GPV could be built right in Metro Manila, and the system's operations could be sustained for 10 to 20 years, said Sabio, who also claims that it is cheaper to build and operate the system compared to other waste disposal facilities.

Sabio said the Genesyst System could be an alternative to the Metro Manila Development Authority's 2,000-hectare waste disposal facility, which has yet to be started following the disapproval of residents of Quezon, the targeted site.

He said that, as opposed to a sanitary landfill, the GPV converts the waste into useful materials instead of storing them for a long time and allowing the waste to pose environmental risks.

The Genesyst System is also a profitable venture.

Aside from earning from the tipping fee the system's partner company would require, profit could also be made through the sale of ethanol and other by-products.

Metro Manila traffic getting worse

From page A17

Reports from the MMDA metrobase show that traffic in Metro Manila yesterday, the third day of the UVVRP suspension, was worse at night than it was in the daytime.

According to Vergel de Dios, the South Superhighway has been experiencing heavy traffic flow since Monday's ban.

He believes the reason for this is that those who cannot pass through Makati tend to use this road.

The UVVRP was suspended in the whole of Metro Manila, except Makati.

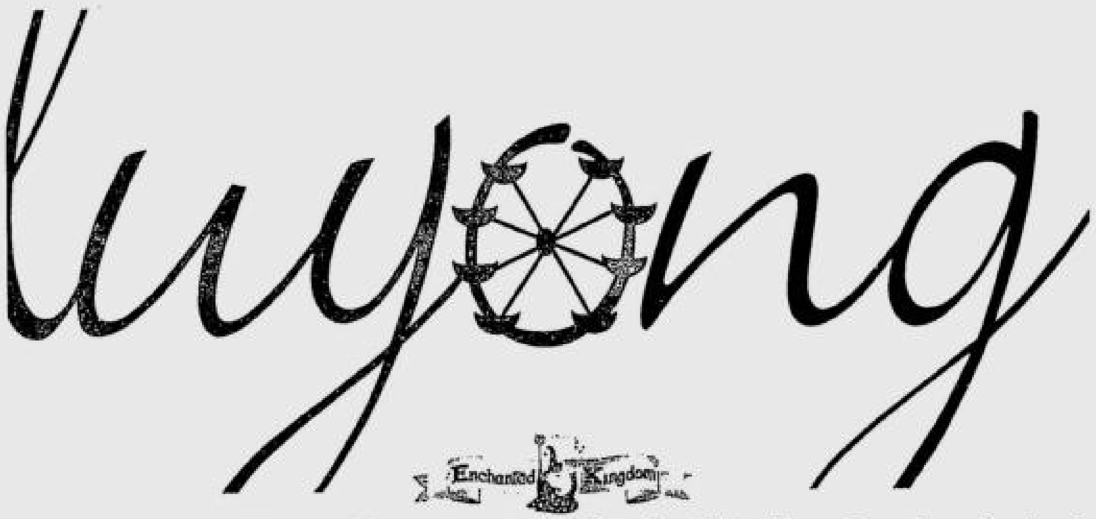
The heaviest flow of daytime traffic was recorded on the Southbound lane of Edsa in the mornings, especially on the intersections of Kamuning, Aurora, Ortigas, Guadalupe and Santolan.

In Manila, Roxas Boulevard, Quirino Avenue and Ramon Magsaysay Boulevard also registered heavy flow of vehicles, while in Quezon City, traffic was heaviest on Commonwealth and Araneta avenues.

ERRATUM

Enchanted Kingdom wishes to correct an announcement on the article "Stan Lee film at theme park in Laguna" published in page D8 of the Philippine Daily Inquirer's February 05 issue. Enchanted Kingdom will offer the Superhero Seven Bundle promo from February 7 to March 30.

Guests who come in a group of 7 can just buy 5 Ride-All tickets and get two Ride-All tickets for free. The Superhero Seven Bundle replaces the special admission ticket called "Super 7".



On February 8 and 9, celebrate Mandaluyong Day at Enchanted Kingdom! All Mandaluyong City residents and employees* can avail of our Buy 1, Take 1 promo on all Ride-All tickets bought at the park's Front Gate (maximum of 10 tickets/person). And if you're not from Mandaluyong, don't worry. We'll have a great way to celebrate your city's Foundation Day really soon!

*Proof of residency and employment must be presented upon purchase. Per DTI- Laguna Permit no. S-01-019, Series of 2003.

Makati Sales Office: G/F Tropical Palms Condominium, De la Rosa Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City • Park Address: Enchanted Kingdom, San Lorenzo South, Sta. Rosa, Laguna • Tel. N - 830-2111 to 16, 843-6073 to 78 • Tickets also available at all Ticketworld outlets: National Bookstore branches • Tower Records (Makati, Alabang) • Robinson's Department Stores (Galleria, Manila)

Recline. Relax. And read about life's ups and downs.

We've got everything on the changing economy, labor forces and market issues.
Not to mention most of the country's businessmen who listen to what we have to say.

BUSINESS PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

February is Down Syndrome Consciousness Month

DOWN Syndrome is the most common birth defect. Formerly referred to as mongolism, it is a form of mental retardation resulting from a genetic defect. It occurs in about one in every 800 births and affects people of all races and economic levels equally.

The most common type of Down Syndrome, Full Trisomy 21, results when either the egg or the sperm contributes and extra chromosome No. 21 that produces the mental and physical characteristics of Down Syndrome.

The extra chromosome No. 21 appears at the moment of conception and is not the result of anything the mother did, or did not do, during the pregnancy. Down Syndrome is simply a genetic accident that can, and does happen to anyone.

Early intervention training from birth, along with a stimulating home environment and good medical care, enable people with Down Syndrome to become active, contributing members of society.

The Down Syndrome Association of the Philippines Inc. was founded in late 1991 to offer support to families who have a child with Down Syndrome and to initiate, develop, promote, encourage and support programs and projects concerning Down Syndrome.

To accomplish its objectives, DSAPI operates through the following working committees, each chaired by a DSAPI director: parent support group committee, early intervention committee, Year 2 kids with Down Syndrome Committee, medical advisory committee, public relations committee, education committee, schools and special training facilities committee, and membership and hospitality committee.

Its sources of funding primarily are general membership fees and voluntary contributions and donations from friends of DSAPI. Regularly, the association is aided by companies and foundations through financial assistance. The programs of the association are greatly aided by the services of student volunteers from various Metro Manila colleges and universities. DSAPI works hard with the end view of replacing sorrow, fear, guilt, confusion and anger with the positive attitudes of warmth, love, understanding and hope.

To learn more about DSAPI's programs for families who have members with Down Syndrome, visit its offices at MRCFI Building, Camia Street, Guadalupe Viejo, Rockwell Compound, Makati City, or call telefax 895-9642. E-mail dsapi@hotmail.com. In Cebu, DSAPI is at the Juanito King Foundation Inc., 8th floor, Cebu Holdings Center, Cebu Business Park, Cebu City, with telephone number (32)232-6061, fax (32)232-6063. In Davao, DSAPI is at Anflocor, Damosa Complex, Lanang Commercial Center, Davao City, telefax (82) 234-2280.

JESUS IS LORD CHURCH
TOUCH CARD

PLDT SIGNS PARTNERSHIP WITH JIL

PLDT signed a partnership agreement with Jesus is Lord (JIL) Foundation for the launching of the PLDT Touch Card Jesus is Lord special edition in celebration of JIL's silver anniversary. Shown here during the contract signing are JIL executive director Adoracion Villanueva and PLDT senior product manager for cards Kristine Ignacio, 2nd and 3rd from left. Also in photo are ZOE VP for marketing Soc Garcia, extreme left, and PLDT national retail sales senior manager Gigi Astudillo.

Tribute to national artists

GANTIMPALA Theater Foundation, in cooperation with the National Parks and Development Committee, present its 25th season ender, a twin bill production of English plays by two national artists for theater Severino Montano's "Parting at Calamba" and Wilfrido Ma. Guerrero's "Wanted: A Chaperon." Performances of the twin bill are slated on Feb. 8 and 9 (10 a.m. and 2 p.m.) at the RFC Cinema Theater, Las Pinas City, on Feb. 21, 22 and 23 (same time) at the AFP Theater, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, and on March 1 and 2 (same time) at the Saint Cecillia's Hall, Saint Scholastica's College. For ticket inquiries, call the Gantimpala Theater marketing office at 899-5745 or 896-3505, or call the Gantimpala Theater main office at 528-0603 or 0918-9212866.

VMMC RECEIVES CARDIAC MONITOR

In October 2002, the presidents of Bayani Consulting and Nurse Immigration USA took Jayne Matte-Wilson and her colleagues for a hospital tour at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center ER Department. In the course of the trip, the need for cardiac monitors came up. When Matte-Wilson returned to Arizona, she searched her hospital for extra cardiac monitors. In December, she returned to the VMMC ER Department with one of the four monitors that she donated. The rest of the monitors will be shipped here courtesy of Bayani Consulting and Nurse Immigration USA. Shown at the VMMC emergency room are Arthur Cantos RN, CEO Bayani Consulting, Jayne Matte-Wilson RN, nursing recruitment manager, University Medical Center in Arizona, Dr. Eleanor Villanueva, chief OPD, Veterans Memorial Medical Center, Dr. Leonardo Borromeo, medical director, ER department, and Meladee Stankus RN, CEO, Nurse Immigration USA.

BITS & Clips

Beetle model car giveaway extended

CITIBANK cardholders have more chances to own a free Mini-Beetle model car with Citibank's PayLite Beetlemania raffle promotion. The free Mini-Beetle model car offer has been extended until Feb. 15. Simply use your Citibank credit card, charge to PayLite Installment Plan, and bring home this true collector's item. PayLite transactions with a minimum single purchase amount of P5,000 at participating stores within the promo period will qualify for one Mini-Beetle model car, while every P3,000 charged or converted to PayLite in a single transaction earns cardholder one electronically generated raffle entry. The pullback-powered Mini-Beetle model car from Kinsmart is made of die cast metal, measures 1/32 and 4 and ¾" long and features distinct Volkswagen logos. To know more, call the 24-hour CitiPhone at 995-9999 or log on to www.citibank.com.ph.

145th Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes

THE CAPUCHIN Community in the Philippines celebrates the 145th Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes on Feb. 11 at the National Shrine along Retiro corner Kanlaon Streets, Sta. Mesa Heights, Quezon City. This year's theme focuses on "Mary and the Family". The new parish priest and rector of the shrine, Fr. Mario G. Dorado OFM Cap., together with the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of Lourdes, Parish Pastoral Council, and all other parish organizations invite devotees to the Novena Masses at 5:30 daily until Feb. 10. Highlight is the shrine's blessing of the sick on Feb. 8 at 5 p.m. with Bishop Nestor Cano DD as presider and homilist. The Grand Fiesta will be celebrated Feb. 11 with hourly masses from 5 to 11 a.m. with a high noon mass to be presided by Bishop Soc Villegas DD. Hourly masses resume at 5 p.m. with a grand procession at 5:30 p.m. Closing rites take place at the 8 p.m. high mass with Fr. Mario Dorado OFM Cap as presider.

Product FILES

A good night's sleep with New Modess All Nights

MODESS introduces an all-new pad with New Modess All Nights. This innovation gives you the best protection at night with its unique back-flow guard feature, a longer and wider back portion for extra coverage. Now you're sure to get active leak protection even during heavy nights or even heavy days.

Get a good night and have a good day with New Modess All Nights, available in all leading supermarkets nationwide.

Filter in Sharp washers helps clothes get cleaner

HOW do you get your laundry really clean when the water you use isn't very clean to begin with? This is a problem that Sharp, a leading consumer electronics manufacturer, has solved.

Sharp Corp. of Osaka, Japan announced it had recently developed for the global market a washing machine that filters water before it enters the machine's tub. Sharp says the filter technology is the first of its kind in the world. Dubbed the Aquamagic, the new line of appliances are equipped with purifying filters that effectively remove iron and iron oxide (rust) particles from water. The yellowing effect on clothes is attributed to the gradual accumulation of iron and rust in the fibers of clothing.

Koji Domoto, AVP and division general manager for domestic sales of Sharp (Philippines) Corp., said the new fully automatic models are now available and are appropriate for Philippine households using deep-well water. Deep-well water contains more minerals and contaminants than commercially treated water. Domoto says these revolutionary washers are manufactured locally, greatly contributing to Sharp's adaptability to the Filipino consumers' needs. In terms of market share, Sharp is the number one washing machine brand in the Philippines, cornering around 50 percent of the market.

An additional benefit provided by the fully automatic Aquamagic washers is that they reduce water consumption by roughly 30 percent. This conservation benefit is achieved through the employment of a unique hole-less tub. The tub is made of stainless steel that prevents growth of molds. Black molds that grow inside conventional tubs have been known to cause allergic dermatitis in some people. Thus, Sharp's Aquamagic does laundry with high efficiency, as the water being used is in itself very clean to begin with.

AMA invites high schools to join 2nd IT Olympiad

AFTER the resounding success of the AMA IT Olympiad 2002, the AMA Foundation is now gearing up to stage the AMA IT Olympiad Year 2, with more than P1 million worth of cash prizes, rewards and scholarship grants to be given away to lucky winners.

The challenge is open to all 4th year High School students from either public or private schools. There will be three levels of competition - local selection, regional competition and national championship. Local selection will be held at all local AMA Computer Colleges nationwide; the Regional Competition, at designated venues immediately within the vicinity of the Regional Contest Secretariat; and the National Championship, at a designated venue in Metro Manila. Participants in the national competition will enjoy an all expense paid trip, covered by the AMA.

Topics to be covered include terminology, personalities and their contribution, history, computer fundamentals: hardware, software processing, basic networking, internet, information systems, programming languages, application software and database.

For inquiries and registration details, contact any AMA campus in your area. Official competition primer and kit are available at all AMA Computer Colleges nationwide or via www.ama.edu.ph/amaolympiad Accomplished entry forms and other requirements must be submitted to any AMA campus nationwide.

MERITORIUS PERFORMANCE

Universal Motors Corp (UMC), the exclusive assembler and distributor of Nissan light commercial and recreational vehicles, recognizes Nissan North Edsa for its excellence in customer service for the 2nd quarter of 2002. Excellence awards are given regularly by UMC to its dealers/employees nationwide who give unparalleled performance in sales and customer service. Joey Rillo (left), UMC's senior manager for relationship marketing, bestows the award to Iska Jose, customer relationship manager and Vincent Licup, VP for sales of Nissan North Edsa. Also receiving an award from UMC are the Nissan sales representatives of Royce Motors who bagged the citation for Excellence in Customer Service.

TBI SUPPORTS PSID EXHIBIT

Trendway Builders Inc., an importer of Hans Laminated Flooring, recently supported the PSID Exhibit at LKG Tower, which took place Oct. 2 to 31 last year. Shown (from left) are Genevie Chan, Sabrina Sevilla, Kaye Saavedra, and Edmund Lee (general manager of TBI), Roselyn Ledesma and Claudine Rivera. TBI, the exclusive distributor of Hans Flooring (HDF Laminate Flooring), will be holding its annual dealer's night this Feb. 8 at Max's Restaurant at 21 Scout Tuazon Street near Roces Avenue, Quezon City.

in cooperation with
Vaseline

GH-VASELINE TLC MOM OF THE YEAR AWARDED

Vaseline Lotion and Good Housekeeping recently awarded Ginny Roces de Guzman (fourth from left) as the GH-Vaseline TLC Mom of the Year. A mother of five children, Ginny is also co-owner of Sugarhouse, cookbook author, and owner of Cooks Exchange. Ginny shows how full-time entrepreneurial moms can lead balanced lives. Particularly, Ginny's healthy, nourished skin says a lot about the special kind of care she gives herself and her family. The Good Housekeeping-Vaseline TLC Mom of the Year award is given to mothers who best live out their role as nurturer to their family and their community. The award was presented in partnership with Vaseline Lotion who brings to mothers everywhere the experience of happily nourished skin. Presenting the award are (from left): Jillian Panganiban of Masscom; Jessica Gonzales of Unilever Phils.; Apple Lejano, Good Housekeeping editor-in-chief; Fe Bolisay of Masscom; and Whitney Cua of Unilever Phils.

For screening times, call 729-7777
Schedules are subject to change without prior notice

AYALA CINEMAS NOW SHOWING

G1 GLORIETTA 1

1	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
2	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
3	HERO
4	I SPY

G4 GLORIETTA 4

1	HERO
2	I SPY
3	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN 11:30, 2:15, 5:00, 7:45, 10:30
4	LORD OF THE RINGS: TWO TOWERS
5	THE EYE
6	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
7	THE HOT CHICK

GB1 GREENBELT 1

1	OFF KEY (EXCLUSIVE) 12:25, 2:45, 5:05, 7:25, 9:45
2	TWO WEEKS NOTICE 12:45, 3:00, 5:15, 7:30, 9:45
Onstage	OGIE ALCASID: OA SA PUSO Feb. 7, 8, 13, 14 & 15

GB3 GREENBELT 3

1	HERO 12:00, 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00, 11:15
2	TWO WEEKS NOTICE 12:00, 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00, 11:15
3	THE EYE 12:45, 2:55, 5:05, 7:15, 9:25, 11:30
4	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN 12:00, 2:45, 5:30, 8:15, 11:00
5	I SPY 12:45, 2:55, 5:05, 7:15, 9:25, 11:30

ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER

1	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
2	HERO
3	I SPY
4	RING (Orig. Japanese Version)
5	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

Reserve your seats by texting SURESEATS G4 (or any Ayala Cinemas) and send to 2333
Or log on to www.sureseats.com
GSC Guaranteed Seat Cinema

MMTA

METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

EMAIL: mmta@asia.com

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA

(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1	HERO
2	THE EYE
3	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
4	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
5	THE RING
6	I SPY
7	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
8	SUKDULAN
9	BELOW
10	HOT CHICK

Pearl Plaza Cinemas

(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1
2
3
4
5
6
Golden Pearl THX

Masagana CINEMA 1 2 & 3

(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1	SUKDULAN
2	I SPY
3	BALAT SIBUYAS

starmall Movies

www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986

1	I SPY
2	BELOW
3	BALAT SIBUYAS
4 DOLBY DIGITAL EX	HERO
5	SUKDULAN

METROPOLIS star

www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Alabang) tel 850.4285

1	BELOW
2	BALAT SIBUYAS
3	HERO
4	I SPY
5	SUKDULAN
6	TWO WEEKS NOTICE

M star

www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Las Pinas)
tel 873.5004

1	ANALYZE THAT
2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

PREMIERE CINEMA THX

(Makati City) tel 751.2010 to13

HERO

Center Plaza Cinema

(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	THE RING
2	HULA MO HULI KO

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL INC

tel 930.9515

1	RESERVE
2	BALAT SIBUYAS
3	RESERVE

Sunshine

(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	I SPY
2	SUKDULAN
3	BALAT SIBUYAS
4	RESERVE

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City

(Manila) tel 734.0588

1	HERO
4	BALAT SIBUYAS
5	BELOW
6	SUKDULAN
7	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
8	I SPY
9	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

Gotesco Caloocan

tel 362.3508

2	RESERVE

Gotesco Grand Central

(Caloocan) tel 365.7928

1	BALAT SIBUYAS
2	SUKDULAN
3	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
4	I SPY
5	BELOW
6	HERO
7	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
8	LORD OF THE RING
9	FEMME FATALE

Gotesco Commonwealth

tel 951.0082

1	BALAT SIBUYAS
2	I SPY
3	SUKDULAN
4	HERO
5	BELOW

Gotesco Ortigas

tel 656.6795

1	BALAT SIBUYAS
2	SUKDULAN
3	HERO
4	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
5	I SPY

Universal

(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	BALAT SIBUYAS

Sampaquita

(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	SUKDULAN

Dilson

(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson	BALAT SIBUYAS
Lords	BALAT SIBUYAS
Jennet	

MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong

tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	HERO
2	SUKDULAN
3	I SPY
4	TWO WEEKS NOTICE

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto SUPER CINERAMA

tel 733.4238

1	I SPY
2	HERO
3	BALAT SEBUYAS
4	SUKDULAN
5	TWO WEEKS NOTICE

FRC Cinema

(Talaba Bacoor Cavite)

1
2

Berma Cinema

(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 - 879.2029

1	BALAT SEBUYAS
2	SUKDULAN

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT Araneta

MALL CINEPLEX 7

tel 911.3101 loc. 821.8242.8400

1	SUKDULAN
2	THE RING
3	I SPY
4	HERO
5	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
6	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
7	BELOW

FarmersPlaza CINEMAS

tel 911.3101 loc. 821.8242.8400

1	BALAT SIBUYAS
2	I SPY

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall

(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
TEL. (049) 837-0026, 534-2185

1	I SPY
2	SUKDULAN
3	HERO

Cinema 2000 Waltermart

(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	SUKDULAN
2	I SPY
3	HERO
4	TWO WEEKS NOTICE

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall

(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	SUKDULAN
2	I SPY
3	HERO
4	TWO WEEKS NOTICE

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix

(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	THE RING
2	HOT CHICK
3	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
4	

Cinema 2000 MetroTown

(Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729

1	SPECIAL SCREENING
2	SPECIAL SCREENING
3	THE RING
4	SUKDULAN

Magic Star Cinema

(Tarlac City) tel (045) 611.4305

1	THE RING
2	SUKDULAN
3	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

Lianas Cinema

(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1	FEMME FATALE
2	BALAT SIBUYAS
3	SUKDULAN
4	UNFAITFUL CONCUBINE

Lianas MovieCity

(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1	HERO
2	I SPY
3	SUKDULAN
4	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
5	

Olivarez Tri-Cinema

(Binan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	HERO
2	SUKDULAN
3	TWO WEEKS NOTICE

Olivarez Los Baños

tel (049) 249.2558

1	HERO
2	I SPY
3	TWO WEEKS NOTICE

Mega Center Mall

(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283

1	ANLYZE THAT
2	SUKDULAN
3	HOT CHICK
4	EIGHT MILE

Cabuyao

(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1	RESERVE
2	RESERVE

Emperor

(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	LORD OF THE RING
2	SUKDULAN
3	THE RING

Fiesta World Mall

(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	SUKDULAN
2	THE RING
3	LORD OF THE RING
4	ANLYZE THAT

Jade Cinema

(Angeles City) tel (045)887-6001 TO 03

1	I SPY
2	SUKDULAN
3	TRY SEVENTEEN
4	MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING

Cine Nepo Mall

(Angeles City) te (045) 887-0121

1	TRY SEVENTEEN
2	REPLIKATE
3	I SPY
4	ONE HOUR PHOTO

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

FESTIVAL SUPERMALL
Level 4
Festival Supermall
Filinvest - Alabang
Tel. 85035-71 to 72

JET LI
英雄
HERO

NOW SHOWING

SM CINEMA

SM Dial-A-Movie Tel. 833-9999

NOW SHOWING

SM CITY BACOOR

4173888

1	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
2	SUKDULAN
3	HERO
4	BELOW
5	I SPY
6	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
7	BALAT SIBUYAS
8	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

SM CENTERPOINT

7149522 -7161416

1	I SPY
2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
4	BALAT SIBUYAS
5	HERO
6	HOT CHICK
7	RING (JAPANESE)
8	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
9	SUKDULAN
10	BELOW

SM CITY FAIRVIEW

9350740

1	TRY SEVENTEEN
2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3	8 MILE
4	I SPY
5	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
6	SUKDULAN
7	HERO
8	BELOW
9	BALAT SIBUYAS
10	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
11	HOT CHICK
12	THE RING

SM CITY MANILA

5238240

1	HERO
2	I SPY
3	HOT CHICK
4	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
5	8 MILE
6	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
7	BALAT SIBUYAS
8	RING (JAPANESE)
9	THE EYE
10	BELOW
11	TRY 17
12	SUKDULAN

SM MEGAMALL

6331901 • 6329401

1	8 MILE
2	I SPY
3	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
4	HERO
5	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
6	THE EYE
7	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
8	BELOW
9	SUKDULAN
10	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
11	HOT CHICK
12	BALAT SIBUYAS

SM CITY NORTH EDSA

9286462

1	BELOW
2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3	HOT CHICK
4	SUKDULAN
5	THE EYE
6	HERO
7	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
8	I SPY

SM SOUTHMALL

8066888

1	I SPY
2	BELOW
3	HERO
4	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
5	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
6	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
7	THE EYE
8	RING (JAPANESE)
9	SUKDULAN
10	BALAT SIBUYAS

SM CITY CEBU

2313876

1	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
2	HOT CHICK
3	TRY SEVENTEEN
4	ONE HOUR PHOTO
5	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
6	SUKDULAN
7	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
8	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS

SM CITY ILOILO

3209422

1	SUKDULAN
2	CLOSED
3	HOT CHICK
4	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
5	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
6	ANALYZE THAT
7	CLOSED
8	BANGKERO

SM CITY PAMPANGA

7128015

1	I SPY
2	ONE HOUR PHOTO
3	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
4	BANGKERO
5	TRY SEVENTEEN
6	SUKDULAN

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT

8294975

1	SUKDULAN
2	I SPY
3	HERO
4	TWO WEEKS NOTICE

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN

2514302

1	I SPY
2	SUKDULAN
3	HERO
4	BALAT SIBUYAS

SM CITY DAVAO

2976998

1	TRY SEVENTEEN
2	HEAVEN
3	VAMPS
4	BANGKERO
5	ANALYZE THAT
6	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

SM BICUTAN

776-3055

1	HERO
2	BALAT SIBUYAS
3	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
4	I SPY

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

859-2884

1	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
2	ONE HOUR PHOTO
3	HOT CHICK
4	8 MILE

THE PODIUM CINEMA

18 ADB Avenue Ortigas Center Mandaluyong City
833-8976

1	HERO 11:15 FS/11:45 MF/2:00/4:15/6:30/8:45/ 10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:45 END
2	TWO WEEKS NOTICE 11:15 FS/11:45 MF/2:00/4:15/6:30/8:45/ 10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:45 END

LATE NIGHT SCREENING DURING FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS
Matinee : P100.00 • Screening until 5pm • Monday thru Friday
Regular Rate : P120.00 • After 5pm • Saturday • Sunday • Holidays (Reserved Seating)

Movies are subject to change without prior notice

MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS

@ Robinsons Malls

call-a-movie: 536- 7812

NOW SHOWING

Galleria

632- 9115- 16
639- 7641 loc. 279

THX	HERO
2	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
3	HERO
4	BELOW
5	I SPY
6	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
7	LORD OF THE RINGS
8	THE EYE
9	HOT CHICK
10	SUKDULAN

MATINEE PRICE: P90 THX cinema · P75 tiered cinemas
Mon.- Fri. / 10am- 4pm (EXCEPT HOLIDAYS)

Ermita

536 -7809- 12

1	HERO
2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3	BELOW
4	THE EYE
5	SUKDULAN
6	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
7	I SPY

Metro East - Marcos hway

682- 6193 / 8280

1	THE RING (US VERSION)
2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3	LORD OF THE RINGS
4	I SPY
5	HERO
6	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
7	BELOW
8	SUKDULAN

Novaliches

935- 3229 - 30

1	HERO
2	RING (JAPANESE VERSION)
3	I SPY
4	SUKDULAN
5	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
6	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
7	BELOW
8	HOT CHICK

Malabon Citisquare

288-0985 / 288-2575

1	HERO
2	SUKDULAN
3	I SPY
4	TWO WEEKS NOTICE

Star Mills- Sn. Fernando, Pamp.

875- 1927
961- 5318 / 5270

1	ONE HOUR PHOTO
2	SUKDULAN
3	TRY SEVENTEEN
4	I SPY
5	BANGKERO
6	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

Imus

471- 8188 / 875- 3838

1	HERO
2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3	I SPY
4	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
5	SUKDULAN
6	BALAT SIBUYAS

Sta. Rosa Laguna

049-8370907

1	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
2	HERO
3	I SPY
4	SUKDULAN
5	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

Bacolod

441- 0453 / 0459

1	LORD OF THE RINGS II
2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3	HOT CHICK
4	ANALYZE THAT
5	SUKDULAN
6	BANGKERO

Iloilo

336- 8077 - 78

1	LORD OF THE RING II
2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3	HOT CHICK
4	ANALYZE THAT
5	SUKDULAN
6	BANGKERO

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Going down memory lane with The Flintstones

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

I'VE always been an old soul. I prefer listening to **Johnny Mathis** and **Frank Sinatra** than MTV boybands.

That's why I immensely enjoyed watching the retro band "Flintstones and the Gang" (with guest vocalist **Mila Garcia** who's been a diva all her life) at Dish in Rockwell recently.

So many people have been raving about the group, so I checked out their gig for myself. I was impressed with their superb blending and wide range of repertoire from the '60s to current hits.

No request from the crowd went unheeded. As a self-confessed music lover (my radio is on 24 hours a day and I make it a point to watch different bands or acoustic groups weekly), I know how it sucks when you request for a particular song and the band doesn't know how to play it. Some bands just go through the motions.

Flintstones really let the emotions show in all their numbers. As band leader **Malu Fernando** says, "We take time to really rehearse every song. We don't just go up on stage for the heck of performing and for the money. Even if we all have day jobs and we are all professionals, our common passion for music keeps us together."

This day and age when there are tunes which seem more like noise, it's a welcome respite to listen to honest-to-goodness real music like what Flintstones offers its audience gig after gig.

I always associate a particular song with a certain episode in my semi-telenovela, semi-la vida loca life. Listening to the Flintstones that night made my mind spin with so much memories.

Neither a show band nor a dance band, Flintstones and the Gang may be aptly called a party band. Whether it's a club gig, a concert or a private party, they almost instantly and naturally transform the atmosphere into a party.

Flintstones is not complete without the participation of The Gang: the audience and its loyal fans. Going beyond the normal audience participation of dancing or singing along with the band, the group welcomes talents who want to jam with the band onstage.

Thus, every Flintstones performance has surprise guest performers.

Flintstones is composed of **Tom Canlas, Mon Chunaco, Tolits Callueng** (lead vocals), **Jun Raymundo** (lead guitarist and musical director) who happens to be **Ina Raymundo**'s dad.

It was so heartwarming to see Ina groove to her dad's music that night, along with her husband **Bryan** and **Giselle Sanchez**. Ina even gamely sang a fast number with the band.

On back-up vocals and guitar is **Dan Reyes**. Bassist is **Ernie Amoroso** and drummer-bandleader is **Manuel Fernando**.

Catch Flintstones on Feb. 8, 15, 21 and 28 at Amoeba Music Recall Eastwood City, Feb. 18 at Tavern on the Square in Makati, Feb. 24 at Dish Rockwell and every Wednesday of February at Grilla Libis, so you'll see what I mean.

For inquiries, please contact Adlib Talent Management at 411-2939.

Boyz II Men at the Fort

SPEAKING of my love for music, I'm all agog waiting for the Valentine concert of Boyz II Men. They are now in Japan performing and soon enough, they will be here in Manila.

As I always say, when it comes to music, once you go black there's no going back. Even people with hearts of steel can't help but melt when they hear any Boyz II Men tune.

The six-time Grammy winner will serenade fans with some of their most unforgettable songs like "I'll Make Love To You," "End of the Road," "Four Seasons of Loneliness," "On Bended Knee," "A Song for Mama," "Water Runs Dry," their duet with Mariah Carey in "One Sweet Day" and their latest hit single, "The Color of Love."

Boyz II Men will perform Feb. 14 at the Fort Open Field, 8:30 p.m. For tickets, rush to any SM Ticketnet outlet. For inquiries and reservations, call 911-5555 or 373-5734.

"Boys II Men Live" is presented by Jag Jeans, Smart Communications and New Close-Up Lemon Mint.

Guess who?

GUESS who this TV host whom I featured in my "Guess List" a few issues ago whom I know is wooing a pretty newcomer even if he has a girlfriend abroad.

Technically, he's still free to court any girl he wants so that's none of my business. The funny thing is when he came across my blind item about him, he started staying away from the newcomer (who happens to be my friend) and told her that he feels bad because I am his friend.

For the record, I know so many juicy secrets but if it's told in confidence, I never divulge a word.

In this case, what am I to do? The girl approached me for help and naturally, woman to woman, I would side with her. That does not make me less of a friend to the TV host, does it?

I have written many favorable things about the guy in the past and his manager has been extremely kind to me. But that doesn't exempt him from getting the flak in this column.

HONEST-TO-GOODNESS MUSIC. Flintstones offers a different repertoire gig after gig.

Why does he create his own ghost only to run away from it? The way he dishes out blind items in his talk show makes it seem like he's immaculate. I have been dragged into the most vicious scandals in show biz, but I never pretended to be something I'm not. I answer every question head-on.

A gay colleague told me before that the TV host is so "image-conscious." When the host was linked to another actress before, he left skid marks as soon as he found out that the actress was a single mother.

If it's any consolation, I told my friend (the newcomer) that at least while it's still early, she already found out his real intentions. If he was dead-serious about pursuing her, a harmless blind item should not stop him.

Personal

THANKS from the bottom of my hyperactive heart to my ever-dependable friends **Nana Aoyong** (gracious owner of Prince Plaza Hotel Baguio), **Dr. Jun Carreon** (fun-loving bud behind Coffee Overdose) and **Jocelyn Española** for going out of their way for me.

May your kindness come back to you a hundredfold (in hundred dollar bills and otherwise).

For feedback, e-mail friends_at_dsquare@yahoo.com or jaimealsan@yahoo.com

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	BAKAT / BRAZEN WOMAN
ODEON	BALAT SIBUYAS
ODEON-2	MASARAP ANG UNANG KAGAT / NAIIBANG HAYOP
ROBEN	BALAT SIBUYAS
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY KIDS 2 · MASTER DISGUISE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	SUKDULAN
CORONET B	UNFAITHFUL / ACCIDENTAL SPY
QUEZON-1	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
REMAR	BALAT SIBUYAS
REMAR-2	SUKDULAN
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	SUKDULAN
B	BALAT SIBUYAS
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	I SPY
CINEMA-2	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	BALAT SIBUYAS
CINEMA-2	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
CINEMA-3	THE RING
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	FEMME FATALE
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
CINEMA-6	LASTIKMAN
CINEMA-7	8 MILE
CINEMA-8	HOT CHICK
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HERO
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	I SPY
CINEMA-12	SUKDULAN
CINEMA-14	BELOW
CINEMA-15	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
CINEMA 1	D.E ANOTHER DAY
CINEMA 2	BAHO
CINEMA 3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA 4	[illegible]
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City
☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND EX

HOT CHICK
P13
12:50,3:00,5:10,
7:20,9:30

I SPY
P13
1:20,3:30,5:40,
7:50,10:00

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
P13
1:10,4:15,
7:00,9:50

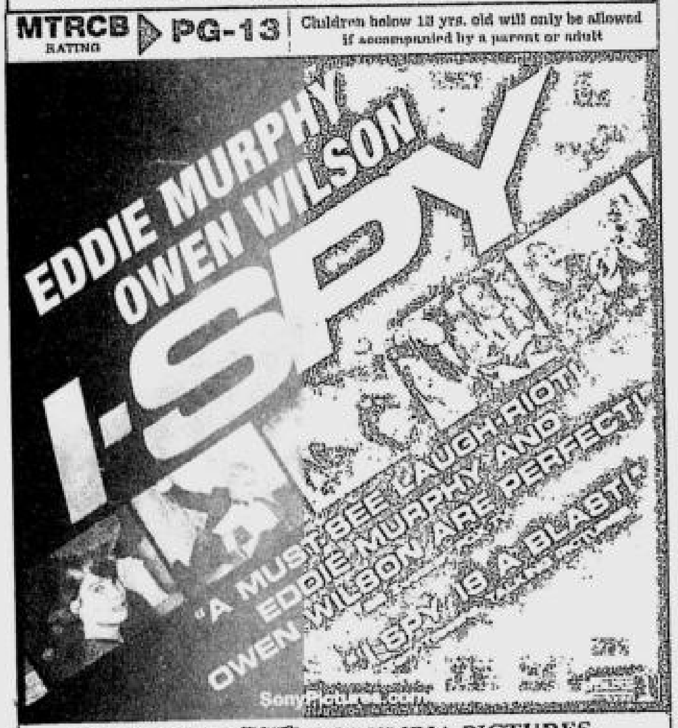
HERO
P13
12:40,3:00,5:20,
7:40,10:00

ANALYZE THAT
P13
1:00,3:10,5:20,
7:30,9:40

TWO WEEKS NOTICE
P13
12:50,3:10,5:30,
7:50,10:10

MATINEE P80.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5 PM - MON. TO FRI.

2ND "ACTION COMEDY" DAY!
MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult



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MTRCB RATING ▶ R RESTRICTED Strictly for ADULTS No one below 18 yrs. may be admitted.

"GUSTO KONG MAG-EKSPERIMENTO..."
Sukdulan
hanggang saan
ka sasabay?
hanggang kailan
ka bibigay?

DIRECTED BY MAC C. ALEJANDRE
NOW SHOWING

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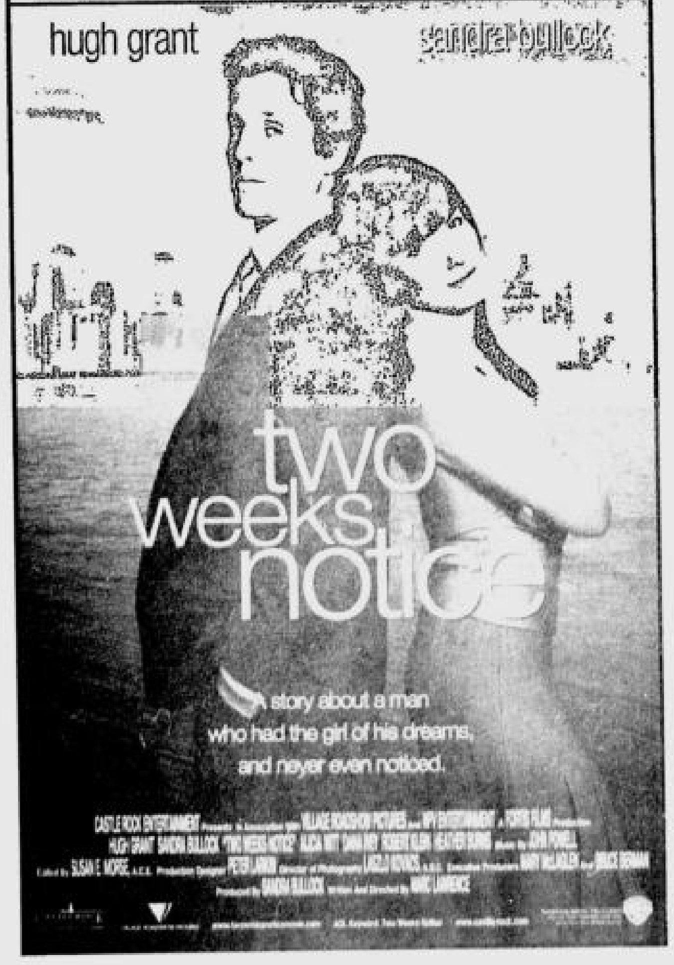

THEATRE-MALL
GREENHILLS
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 1
TWO WEEKS NOTICE
11:30, 2:05, 4:40,
7:15, 9:50
P13
CINEMA 2
I-SPY
11:50, 2:05, 4:20
6:35, 8:50
P13
TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

MUSIC MUSEUM
FEB 7-8 & 21-22, 2003 "MULA SA PUSOD (Pababa)" 9:00 PM
FEB 13-15, 2003 Greatest Hits Series 2 - A Valentine Special 9:00 PM
FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS. CALL: 721-6726 OR 721-0635

MTRCB RATING PG-13 Parents are strongly cautioned not to bring children below 13 yrs. old to watch this movie because of the intensity of the horror and visual content.
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DI MARUNONG MATAKOT? MATIBAY ANG DIBDIB?
P'WES, ITO ANG MOVIE NA DI MO KAKAYANIN... TIYAK 'YUN!
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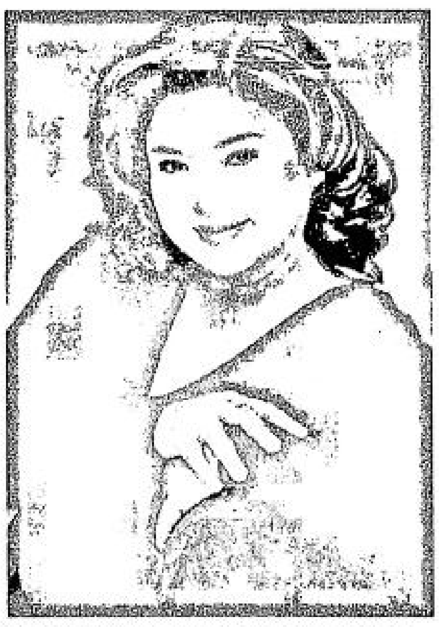
WINNER OF 39TH GOLDEN HORSE AWARDS, BEST ACTRESS, BEST SPECIAL EFFECTS

Marissa puts more laughter and spirit into Valentine



SANCHEZ. Impersonates local and foreign divas.

THE TIMES are a-changing, and so have Valentine shows.

Singer-comedian Marissa Sanchez performs in two different shows in this season of hearts. Instead of the usual sentimental, all-music shows, Marissa's are sexy, wacky, off-beat.

On Thursday, Feb. 13, Marissa performs with the very popular group Spirit of '67, a bunch of Ateneo alumni who have reunited to become a much sought-after revival band.

The show, called "Naughty Me and My Spirit," will be at the Le Pavilion at Metropolitan Park Complex along Roxas Boulevard in Pasay City.

Spirit of '67 is composed of Steve de Jesus on drums, Nato Canlas on keyboards, Malu Fernando on drums, Jake Arellano on bass, and Cholo Santiago, Candy Dizon and Bimbo Santiago on vocals.

The next day, Feb. 14, Marissa stars in "Divastating Valentine," in which she pokes fun at so-called divas at Hotel Inter-Continental Ballroom.

"Maybe, if I had not been overweight, people would look at me as a diva, *'di ba?*," Marissa deadpans. "But I'm happy making fun of divas, both local and foreign."

Among the divas that Marissa impersonates are Kuh Ledesma, Zsa Zsa Padilla, Lea Salonga, Sharon Cuneta, Barbra Streisand, Shirley Bassey and Angela Bofill, among many others.

"Naughty Me and My Spirit" and "Divastating Valentine" are the initial offerings of Golden Circle Ad Com Corp. and are both directed by Dingdong Cabazor.

Sponsors include Nextel, Slimmers World, Magic 89.9, Golden Circle Properties. The shows are for the benefit of Smile Foundation Inc., Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko.

Tickets are available at Ticketnet outlets (911-5555), Golden Circle Ad Com (636-1427 or 636-1264) and National Bookstore Ticketworld (891-5610).

Talent show

FOUR contestants with ages 12 to 24 will vie for the last semi-final round of the talent show, "Star of the Night" on Saturday, Feb. 8.

The contestants are all winners of the regular monthly competition where they won P50,000 each. They are Florie Mae Lucido, 16; Domiliza Estremos, 15; Sherilyn Diana Flores, 12; and Mary Rose Boto, 24.

On Saturday, one of the four semi-finalists will go home with P100,000 in prize money and get the chance to join the finals on March 1 at the Ultra, where P1 million cash is at stake.

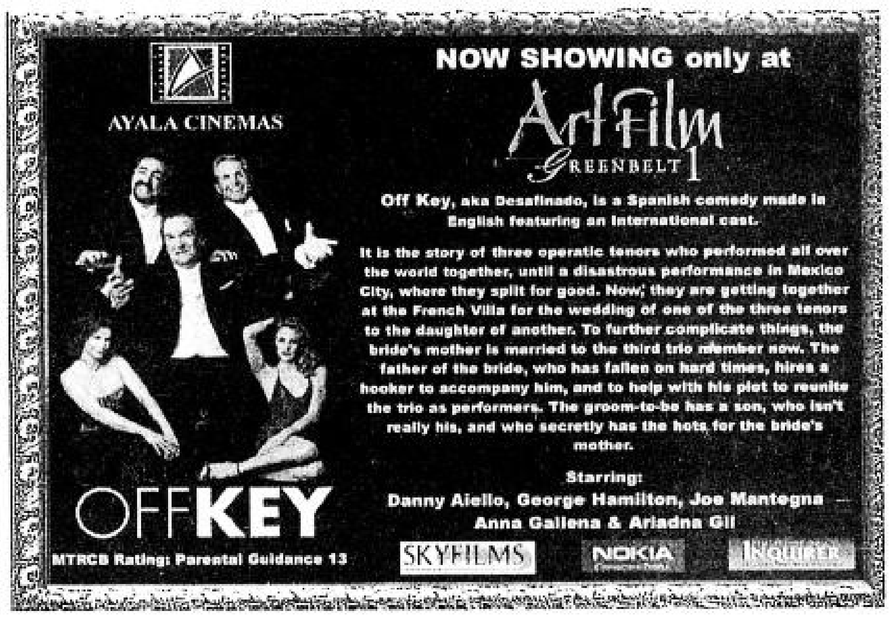
"Star for a Night" is hosted by Regine Velasquez and airs Saturdays, 8 p.m. on IBC 13.

A two-part primer about the contestants will be aired Feb. 15 and 22.

The show is a production of Viva-TV, a Viva Entertainment Group.

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7	
Ali 1	SUKOB/LAN
Ali 2	THE RING
Ali 3	I SPY
Ali 4	HERO
Ali 5	TWO WEEKS NOTICE
Ali 6	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
Ali 7	BELOW
FARMERS PLAZA CINEMAS	
Farmers 1	BALAT SIBUYAS
Farmers 2	I SPY
ARANETA COLISEUM	
FEB 8	LANI MISALUCHA CONCERT
FEB 13	RONAN KEATING CONCERT
FEB 15	ABBA TRIBUTE CONCERT
ELEPHANT WORLD	
FEB 6	10 PM / 3 PM
FEB 7	10 AM / 3 PM
FEB 8	10 AM / 3 PM / 5PM



AYALA CINEMAS
OFF KEY
NOW SHOWING only at
ArtFilm Greenbelt 1

Off Key, aka Desafinado, is a Spanish comedy made in English featuring an international cast.

It is the story of three operatic tenors who performed all over the world together, until a disastrous performance in Mexico City, where they split for good. Now, they are getting together at the French Villa for the wedding of one of the three tenors to the daughter of another. To further complicate things, the bride's mother is married to the third trio member now. The father of the bride, who has fallen on hard times, hires a hooker to accompany him, and to help with his plot to reunite the trio as performers. The groom-to-be has a son, who isn't really his, and who secretly has the hots for the bride's mother.

Starring:
Danny Aiello, George Hamilton, Joe Mantegna — Anna Galiena & Ariadna Gil

MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13
SKYFILMS NOKIA INQUIRER

MADONNA
SWEPT AWAY
AYALA CINEMAS
Laugh out loud & fall in love this February only at
ArtFilm Greenbelt 1
Imagine being shipwrecked on a beautiful island - with someone you really can't stand.

Madonna, Adriano Giannini, Bruce Greenwood, Jeanne Tripplehorn & David Thornton

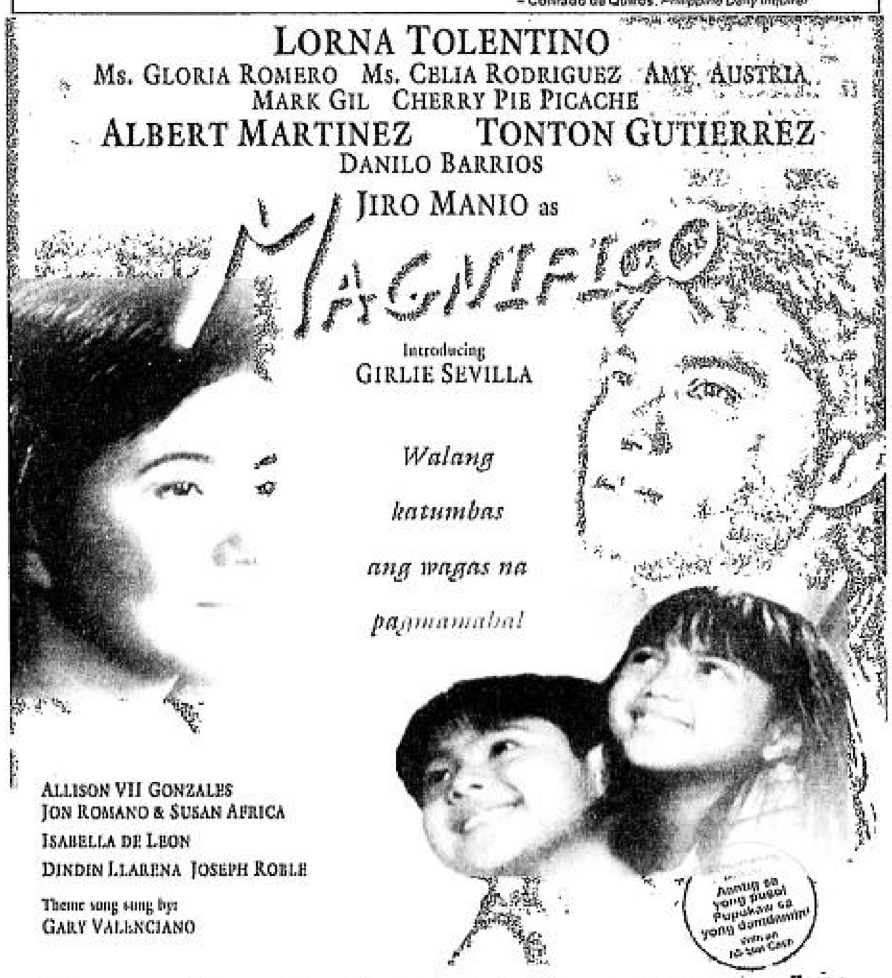
Guy Ritchie directs wife MADONNA in this romantic comedy, where a young sailor (ADRIANO GIANNINI) is cast adrift on an island with his employer, a rich self-centered woman who is used to having her way. Cut off from society, he reverses their roles, stripping her of her pride and controlling her completely. Until, that is, she falls in love with him.

OPENS FEBRUARY 12

MTRCB Rating: Restricted 18
COLUMBIA PICTURES NOKIA INQUIRER

OPENS FEB. 12
PREMIERE NIGHT (FEB. 8), 7:30 P.M. AT SM MEGAMALL 10
ALL TICKETS ISSUED LAST JAN. 7 ARE VALID
MTRCB RATING ▶ G General Patronage ALL AGES ADMITTED

1. Truly a magnificent film. Bravo, Magnifico! – Butch Francisco, *The Phil. Star*
2. The first really good movie of 2003! – Lito B. Zulueta, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*
3. Magnifico is Magnificent! – Mario Hernando, *Malaya*
4. "Pang-Oscar ang kalidad ng Magnifico" – Archie de Calma, *Imbestigador*
5. "Would that we all support this movie with lots of heart and the strength of its quite and hopeful honesty." – Rina Jimenez-David, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*
6. The whole thing is very Pinoy and is a particularly welcome intrusion in our times when people are despairing in this country. – Conrado de Quiros, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*



LORNA TOLENTINO
MS. GLORIA ROMERO MS. CELIA RODRIGUEZ AMY AUSTRIA
MARK GIL CHERRY PIE PICACHE
ALBERT MARTINEZ TONTON GUTIERREZ
DANILO BARRIOS
JIRO MANIO as
MAGNIFICO
Introducing
GIRLIE SEVILLA
Walang katumbas ang wagas na pagmamahal
ALLISON VII GONZALES
JON ROMANO & SUSAN AFRICA
ISABELLA DE LEON
DINDIN LLARENA JOSEPH ROBLE
Theme song sung by:
GARY VALENCIANO
Directed by Maryo J. de los Reyes, DGPI
A Violett Films Production
RELEASED THROUGH GMA FILMS
Violett

Aantig sa yong puso! Pupukaw sa yong damdamin!

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WIN A FREE TRIP FOR TWO TO NEW ZEALAND AT AYALA CINEMAS WHEN YOU WATCH
THE LORD OF THE RINGS
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A JOURNEY TO NEW ZEALAND
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英雄
HERO
ELITE GROUP ENTERPRISES INC. PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH MIRAMAX FILMS AN EDKO FILMS · ZHANG YIMOU STUDIO PRODUCTION
IN COLLABORATION WITH CHINA FILM CO-PRODUCTION CORPORATION · SIL-METROPOLE ORGANISATION LIMITED AND BEIJING NEW PICTURE FILM CO. LTD
A ZHANG YIMOU FILM JET LI TONY LEUNG CHIU WAI MAGGIE CHEUNG MAN YUK IN "HERO" STARRING ZHANG ZIYI CHEN DAOMING AND DONNIE YEN
NOW SHOWING

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AB-noRMaL College
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B.A. sa kalokohan, Masters sa katatawanan!
Directed by Al Tantay
PASUKAN NA SA FEB. 12!

MIKEY
ANDREW E.
RUFA MAE
OGIE
PATRICIA

British gems at half the usual price

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

SOME OF British cinema's more noteworthy releases have just been shown in the UK Film Festival at the Shangri-La Plaza Mall. Tickets were P30 per movie, half the amount of the cheapest ones in regular mall movie houses showing more commercial fare.

That's not such a bad bargain, considering these five films deserve to be seen. Most of them, anyway, depending on your taste.

The black comedy "Divorcing Jack" stars David Thewlis as newspaper columnist Daniel Starkey, a perpetually drunk and rabble-rousing critic of the political arena. His life has a drastic turning point when a young woman he was having an affair with is murdered. Her dying words were "Divorce Jack," presenting Daniel with a complicated riddle that makes his life hell.

Filled with convoluted, confusing plot twists and turns, it's quite difficult to keep track of the characters and goings-on at first. Plus most of them speak in thick Irish accents ("tape" is pronounced "teep," for example), and it's utter confusion from the outset.

Thanks mostly to the clarity of the visuals, the story actually makes sense, the seemingly scattered scenes adding up to a cohesion that's not immediately present. Characters and story points that pop out of nowhere eventually fit in.

The movie co-stars Rachel Griffiths (Brenda in "Six Feet Under") as an off-kilter mystery woman, and Jason Isaacs (from "Harry Potter") as a ruthless gangster.

Bollywood meets 'Billy'

In "Bend It Like Beckham," teenage girls Jesse (Parminder Nagra) and Jules (Keira Knightley) love playing football and dream of excelling in the sport. That shouldn't be a problem, but both girls have obstacles in their paths.

Jesse is Indian, and her family adheres to strict traditional values, which means her playing is an affront to her mother's conservative cultural ideas.

Jules, an only child, has a mother who wants her to stick to normal, "girly" activities.

Both girls have the potential to "bend the ball" like Manchester United's David Beckham, and are honing their skills with the local girls' team under the tutelage of their young coach Joe (Jonathan Rhys Meyers).

It's Bollywood meets "Billy Elliot." Its message of following one's dreams despite the conventions of society blares loudly, and with a colorful, eccentric twist. Race issues and gender stereotyping are preachily, albeit humorously, tackled. The topic of sexuality is handled carefully when some characters are either mistaken for gay, or are revealed as such.

The love angle involving the girls and Joe seems a bit contrived, though. And, as can be expected in feel-good sports competition flicks like this, you know where it's going after the protagonists win: A blooper reel-slash-spliced video with the actors singing along to a happy, happy ditty. Oh, joy.

FOOTBALL-CRAZED GIRLS. Parminder Nagra (right) and Keira Knightly in "Bend It Like Beckham."

Six and sex

"Born Romantic" follows six single people and their brushes with love and sex, all observed by sensitive cab driver Jimmy (Adrian Lester). Petty thug Eddie (Jimi Mistry) pursues Jocelyn (Catherine McCormack), a worrywart grave decorator.

Crooner-wannabe Frankie (Craig Ferguson) has fallen for commitment-hating art historian Eleanor (Olivia Williams). And failed rock musician Fergus (David Morrissey) seeks out his ex-flame Mo (Jane Horrocks), a woman he jilted eight years ago.

The three pairs' stories simultaneously take place, and converge from time to time in a salsa-themed club.

It's a witty rom-com, an unoriginal and predictable one, but smart nonetheless. Three would-be couples tend to keep things interesting as opposed to the usual single pair. Having these particular actors as the lovelorn characters doesn't hurt. It does get overly sentimental in some parts (especially in scenes involving the cabbie); otherwise, it has a comfortable vibe that gives most romantics what they need from a classy date movie.

Coming of age II

The drama "Love and Death on Long Island" stars John Hurt as author Giles De'Ath (emphasis on the apostrophe), an elderly widower who has been a recluse until he accidentally watches an American B-movie starring heartthrob Ronnie Bostock (Jason Priestley). Giles harbors a secret growing obsession for the young man and tracks him down to his Long Island, New York residence, hoping to get a glimpse of him from beyond his scrapbook of magazine photos.

This is a taut, complex piece that can be called a second coming-of-age for the affecting Giles character. He discovers layers of himself he's never known before. His attraction to Ronnie fills a void that's manifested in his solitary, artistic life.

The tone is very light and mature, fortified by the seamless luminescence of the actors. It can't even be categorized solely as a gay film, because Giles' unrequited fascination for a man more than half his age is a metaphor for quests that are often doomed from the start, a love that's dead before it gets a chance to truly live. But the sad writer pursues his dream anyway (like artists do), to find out how his yarn unravels, and to accept his fate no matter what the outcome.

Draining 'docu'

The fifth film, "Last Resort," runs for only about an hour and 10 minutes. It's about Tanya (Dina Korzun), a Russian mother who drags along his 10-year-old son Artiom (Artiom Strelnikov) to England to meet up with her boyfriend Mark. The boyfriend never shows up at the airport, leaving her little choice but to declare themselves as refugees, hoping they'll be afforded sanctuary for the time being.

But they're put in a desolate coastal facility for immigrants, and seeing that they're stuck there indefinitely, Tanya is on the verge of accepting a suspicious businessman's offer of financial assistance. Quick money, but performing in cyberporn seems to be the easiest way to earn it.

Beautifully shot like a documentary, "Last Resort" is as draining for the audience as it is for the characters. Korzun is that convincing an actress. She personifies desperation as the love-addicted children's book artist, professing to start a new relationship with arcade manager Alfie (Paddy Considine) while figuring out how to improvise in her predicaments.

The tale becomes even more poignant when posted interviews of director Pawel Pawlikowski reveal that it was inspired by some autobiographical events.

This diverse selection gives varied facets and nuances to British culture. While you won't adopt a cockney accent after watching these movies, they'll make you wish there will be more of them in the next filmfest, and that they'll be shown longer than just a few days.

Spielberg's heart and soul

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THERE was a time in the '90s when it looked like ace filmmaker **Steven Spielberg** was resting on his laurels. Years passed before he made a new movie, and often it was a sequel to one of his commercial successes. They added more millions to his already fat bank account, but did little to further enhance his reputation as a filmmaker.

Thank goodness, Spielberg has gotten over his slump as a creative artist. For years now, he has been particularly busy with one film or TV project after another, proving that middle age need not to be a fallow time for a filmmaker, and can indeed be his most productive period.

Spielberg's World War Two drama, "Saving Private Ryan," was the highest-grossing movie in the States in 1998. The film won five Oscars, including a Best Director trophy for Spielberg, as well as two Golden Globe awards, for Best Picture and Director.

In addition, the esteemed filmmaker was recognized by his peers with a Directors Guild of America award, and the Producers Guild of America presented him with the prestigious Milestone Award for his impressive contributions to the motion picture industry.

Next, Spielberg and **Tom Hanks** executive-produced the HBO miniseries, "Band of Brothers," which won both Emmy and Golden Globe awards for Best TV Miniseries.

His more recent films include the futuristic thriller "Minority Report" with **Tom Cruise**, and "A.I., Artificial Intelligence." His newest film, "Catch Me If You Can, " stars no less than Hollywood's "King," Tom Hanks, and its "prince," **Leonardo DiCaprio**.

On point of critical acclaim, Spielberg's significant films are "Schindler's List," "Close Encounters of the Third Kind," "Amistad," "The Color Purple" and "The Last Days," a TV film about Holocaust survivors, which won the Academy Award for Best Documentary.

His other films have been blockbuster hits, proving that he not only knows how to make fine movies, but also how to communicate with viewers on an empathetic level.

In fact, Spielberg has directed, produced or executive-produced eight of the 30 top-grossing films of all time! He is a three-time Academy Award winner, copping two Oscars for Best Director and Picture for "Schindler's List," and a third Oscar for Best Director for "Saving Private Ryan."

Spielberg won his first DGA award for "The Color Purple." He is also the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Film Institute, and the prestigious Irving G. Thalberg Award from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

In 1994, Spielberg helped put up the DreamWorks film company, which has chalked up many successes, including three consecutive Best Picture Oscars for "American Beauty," "Gladiator" and "A Beautiful Mind."

What has made Steven Spielberg so successful and acclaimed? His films indicate that he has the heart of a showman and the soul of an artist. But, best of all, even as he slides into his 60s, he has been able to keep the child in him alive and in a constant state of creative wonder.

Even as he takes on increasingly more complex responsibilities as a major film executive, Spielberg still cherishes the value of keeping things simple, childlike and truthful. No wonder his films continue to be loved by viewers from six to 66—and older!

Movies on TV

ON the HBO channel: Thursday, Feb. 6 at 7:15 p.m., "Allan Quatermaine and the Lost City of Gold." Friday, Feb. 7 at 6 p.m., "Coneheads." 2:15 a.m., The Age of Innocence."

Saturday, Feb. 8 at 6 a.m., "Journey to the Center of the Earth." 12:15 p.m., "It Could Happen to You." Sunday, Feb. 9 at 7:30 a.m., "Frankie and Johnny." 2:30 p.m., "Star Trek." 9:45 p.m., "Cats and Dogs." 11:15 p.m., "What Planet Are You From?"

On Cinemax: Thursday, Feb. 6 at 6:30 a.m., "It Happened One Night." 8:15 a.m., "Black Moon Rising." 10:45 p.m., "Blow." 5:30 a.m., "Cinema Secrets: Great Ball of Fire."

Friday, Feb. 7 at 9:30 a.m., "All the Pretty Horses." 5:45 p.m., "Star Trek: The Final Frontier." Saturday, Feb. 8 at 5:15 p.m., "Cinema Secrets: Urban Rampage."

Sunday, Feb. 8 at 8 a.m., "Picking Up the Pieces." 9:30 p.m., "Against their Will." 1:45 a.m., "The Deep." 3:45 a.m., "Cinema Secrets: Hostile Takeovers."

Maid in Manhattan

JENNIFER Lopez plays a modern-day Cinderella in "Maid in Manhattan," about a siingle mother who struggles to earn a living for herself and her child as a housekeeper in an expensive hotel in New York City.

However, her well-ordered life falls apart when she falls in love with a politician (**Ralph Fiennes**), who mistakenly assumes that she's one of the hotel's socialite-guests.

Will a hotel housekeeper from the Bronx and a wealthy politician from midtown Manhattan risk everything for a chance at romance? "Maid in Manhattan" is scripted by **Kevin Wade** ("Working Girl") and directed by **Wayne Wang** ("The Joy Luck Club").

'They'

IN THE new thriller "They," young Billy is kept awake at night after his parents have left his room. At first, his mother doesn't take his fears seriously. But her friends, Sam and Terry, are becoming more concerned about Billy's incessant ramblings.

Then Julia herself starts getting recurrent nightmares. All too soon, she realizes that the "midnight monsters" are all too real. "They" topbills **Laura Regan, Jon Abrahams, Dagmara Dominczyk, Ethan Embry** and **Marc Blucas**.

FILIPINO ARTISTRY. Gary Valenciano to offer a generous serving of his talent in the Los Angeles event.

Gary V. to grace lunar year parade

CELEBRATING his 20th year in show biz, recording superstar Gary Valenciano does the country proud as he takes his act to Hollywood when he graces the 2003 Hollywood lunar year parade.

Gary V. is the country's representative to the Feb. 9 event, considered to be one of the most-awaited festivities in the United States.

He completes Asia's list of top five superstars who will ride a float that will begin its historical route at Hollywood Boulevard and the Vine Street and then proceed to the heart of Hollywood.

Gary is expected to delight the crowd with his infectious spirit and music, singing songs that will heighten the festive mood of the occasion.

The 2003 lunar year parade, the focal point of the New Year festivities in Los Angeles, pays tribute to the growing Asian-American communities in the US.

Gary V. becomes part of the most-anticipated holiday that ranks second to Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Last year, the event drew more than 100,000 people including thousands of young upscale Asians to Hollywood. This year's attendance is estimated to surpass last year's figures.

With this, Gary could only expect a huge turnout of spectators, with a good number of Filipinos jostling to get a good glimpse of him.

Gary V. is legendary in concert promotion in California, having packed such venues as the 6,500-seater Shrine Auditorium, the Universal Amphitheater and the Grand Olympic Stadium, among many others.

Aside from performing before a colorful mix of cultures, Gary joins the festivities and will be around long enough for autograph-signing and picture-taking.

In the magnificent procession of brightly colored lion and dragon dancers, stunning floats and gastronomic feasts, Gary V. will offer a generous serving of Filipino talent and artistry.

Gary performs side by side with the other delegates from the Asian region, figuring in a 90-minute special that will be aired in various states. He was also given the honor to render the finale.

Immediately after, Gary flies to Canada for his concert tour. First stop is Toronto, where he will perform at the Toronto Hershey Center on Feb. 15. Special guests are May Ann Casal, Melissa Fontano, Jon Supan and Bryan Rosal. Philippine Entertainment and Promotions Specialist is mounting the show.

Feb. 16, Gary V. will be at the Winnipeg Convention Center. Guests include the Powerplay Band, May Ann Casal and Melissa Fontano. The show is produced by International Worship Center.

Both the Toronto and Winnipeg shows will have Ron Faustino as musical director.

For bookings and inquiries about Gary, call Manila Genesis Entertainment at (63-2) 721-4405.

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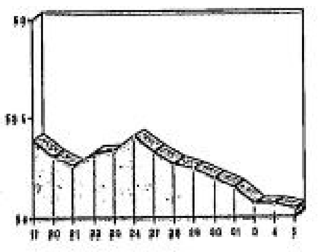


JANUARY-FEBRUARY

GRAPHS BY JOEL PARADEZA

P53.96 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 5, 2003

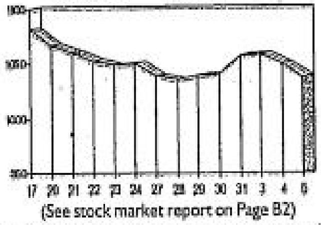
¥119.32 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 5, 2003

GOLD: $383.00-384.00
per ounce Hong Kong, Feb.5, 2003

STOCK MARKET

Stocks dip on Powell jitters

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX
JANUARY- FEBRUARY



(See stock market report on Page B2)

SHARES ended down more than one percent yesterday as investors took their cue from offshore markets and moved to the sidelines ahead of US Secretary of State Colin Powell's address to the United Nations, traders said.

Powell is expected to provide evidence that Saddam Hussein has allegedly been hiding weapons of mass destruction from the eyes of UN inspectors, raising fears for a US-led attack on Iraq.

War jitters sent the Dow Jones index down more than one percent on Tuesday while COMEX gold futures shot to their highest mark since October 1996 and NYMEX crude oil prices spiked 2.5 percent.

"Concern about Powell's impending speech to the U.N. is primarily the factor that pulled the market lower today. Reports suggest the evidence he is likely to produce will strengthen the case for war," said Oliver Plana, head of sales at Asiasec Equities Inc.

The main index finished down 12.41 points, or 1.18 percent, at 1,037,26 points, its second successive session loss after three days of gains. *Reuters*

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

CONGRESS is urging the Department of Finance to withdraw Revenue Regulation 4-2003, which will tighten the grant of tax exemptions under the 10-seater rule, because it will undermine lawmakers' efforts to craft a new vehicle tax system and nudge prices of Asian utility vehicles up to P1.2 million.

Manila Rep. Harry Angping, who chairs the committee on trade and industry, said the DOF was "preempting" the work of Congress, which is likely to approve by next month the draft bill shifting the tax basis from engine size to a vehicle's price and abolishing the tax exemption for vehicles with a seating capacity for at least 10 passengers. The RR 4-2003 is expected to take effect next week even though Angping said that the new tax rules should apply only when current inventories were exhausted.

Angping said RR 4-2003 was a "duplication and overlapping" of the legislators' work.

The DOF and the Bureau of Internal Revenue surprised the industry and lawmakers when they signed last week RR 4-2003. This was just a few days after it was revealed in a Senate public hearing that the government lost P1.5 billion in foregone revenues from the BIR's controversial reclassification of the Honda CR-V into a 10-seater AUV, making it eligible for a lower tax rate.

The Chamber of Automotive Industry of the Philippines Inc. reported yesterday that the new rules would add between P230,000 and P500,000 in the price of each unit since they would have to pay 35 percent to 50 percent in excise taxes since many vehicles would not be eligible for exemption under the 10-seater rule since their jump seats in the compartment would not be counted.

Angping said Congress' main concern was the impact on the industry's sales specifically of AUVs, which account for 43 percent of total sales. He said the new rules would push the price of AUVs beyond the reach of most Filipinos to between P900,000 and P1.2 million each from P600,000 to P850,000 at present.

"RR 4-2003 is an ill-advised move that will erode markets and distort the tax system. There is no reason for this double whammy (drop in government revenues and jobs) at this time when we are experiencing a serious downturn in our economy," Angping said.

Assemblers are asking for a four-month reprieve on the new tax rules to give Congress more time to pass the more "friendly" excise tax reforms, but Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho has firmly rejected appeals for any delay in the tax changes.

Customs reports 39% jump in January collection

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BUREAU of Customs yesterday reported a 39-percent increase in its collection in January to P9.59 billion from P6.89 billion in the same period in 2002.

Customs Commissioner Antonio Bernardo said that based on preliminary data, the bureau's revenues exceeded the month's target of P7.468 billion by 28 percent.

He added that January was traditionally a lean month for Customs, an office celebrating its 101st founding anniversary today, Feb. 6.

The Custom's chief, however, cautioned that moves to suspend import tariffs on petroleum could adversely affect the bureau's improving performance.

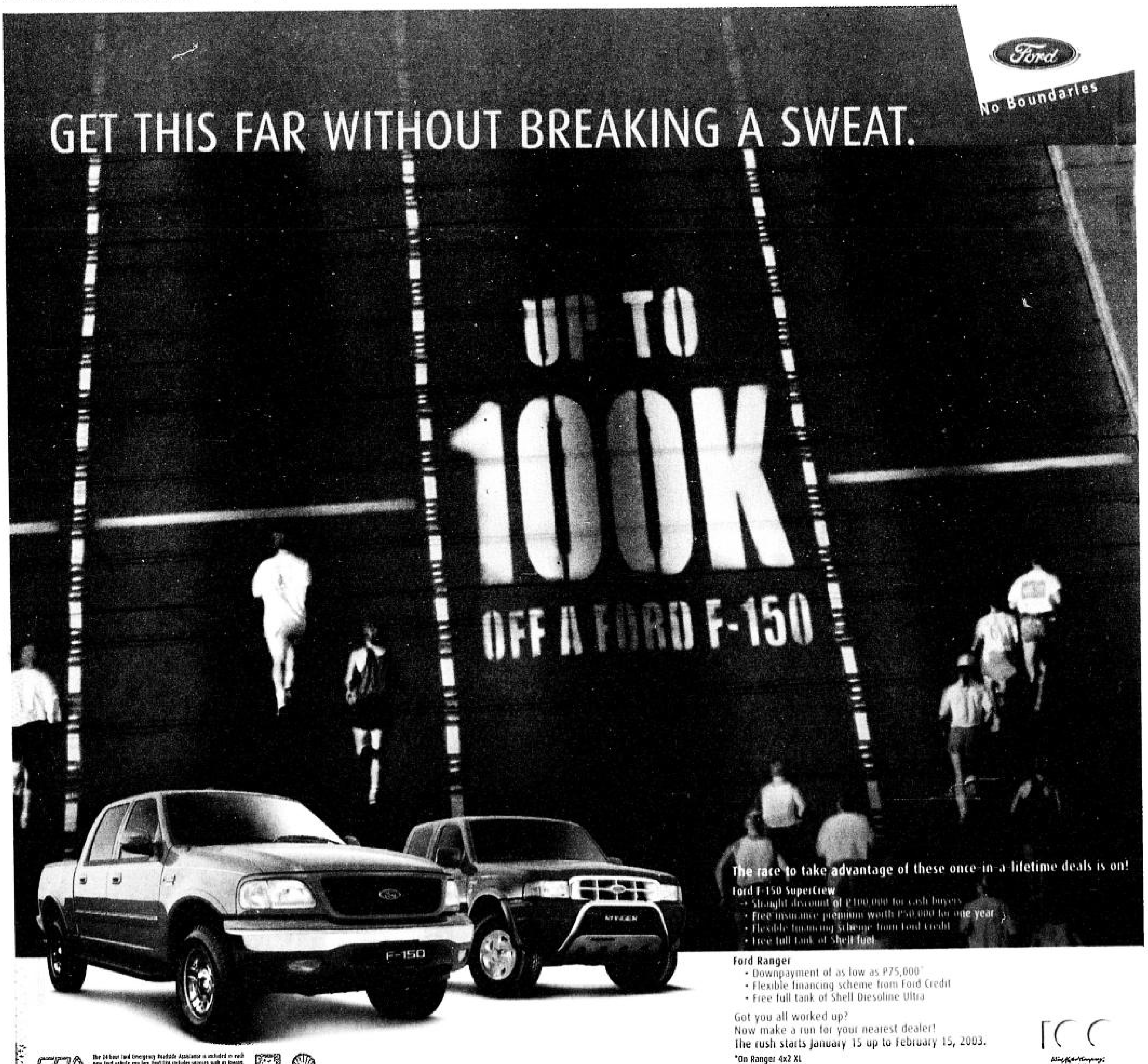
Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said that scrapping, even temporarily the 3-percent import duty on crude oil and 5 percent on finished oil products would bring down the Customs' collection in a year by P5.28 billion or P440 million a month.

He said the government collected import tariffs of P3.13 billion on crude oil and P2.15 billion on finished petrol products.

Bernardo said the import tariffs were crucial for the bureau to meet its P105.6-billion collection target in 2003. The official admitted that the declining value of the peso helped increase the Customs' collection in January.

He credited the bureau's tighter monitoring of importation as the biggest factor in the improved January numbers. The closer monitoring should minimize and eventually stamp out smuggling, which had been the biggest source of leakage in the Customs' revenue stream.

"I'm pleased that all major ports surpassed their respective targets. I think this trend is sustainable," Bernardo said.



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Cheat and tiong

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

SOMEBODY in the Philippine Sports Commission is the talk of the town. He is fast gaining a much deserved reputation as a big spender.

Apparently, the handsome devil spends money like a drunk sailor. PSC insiders are already talking. Where does he get all that money?

The guy goes out for lunch everyday. Not just a few saw him at the finest eating places in town, accompanied by a battalion of hangers-on. You know—*dakilang alalay*.

The group's night life is also something for the books. PSC insiders are willing to bet that his group has already spent money to break the PSC all-time record.

Yet press releases from the PSC could make you cry. They all talked about the meager funding of the commission. It could not train our national pool of athletes.

You therefore could get the impression that the poor PSC was trying its best to make do with what little Congress allotted to it.

To augment its budget, as a matter of fact, it gets funding—a lot of funding—from the state-owned casino firm Pagcor. Look out, Efraim.

A good part of the money which you judiciously administer in Pagcor, once it gets to the PSC, goes to training for marathon competition in drinking and eating.

* * *

OF course you heard of the move of some groups in Tesda, or the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, to do a Nañagas.

They want to do unto Tesda director general Dante Liban what the employees of SSS did unto Vitaliano Nañagas, which is, simply, to kick him out unceremoniously.

The Nañagas case has become the rallying point for other government agencies. All their bosses are afraid to move, fearing they may antagonize the employees.

And so word goes around that, over the weekend, some Tesda employees launched a national signature campaign against Liban.

Known as the "Resign Liban Signature Campaign," it even boasts of high profile leaders in Annie Enriquez Geron and Sonio Lipio, who are both leaders of Tesda unions.

Behind the signature campaign, according to insiders, is a syndicate which makes a killing in Tesda. They don't like Liban. He is not a sing-and-dance man.

* * *

TESDA, believe it or not, is the only government agency involved in technical education, which is actually busy with singing and dancing.

I am not kidding—Tesda issues the clearance for performing artists who seek employment overseas as dancers, singers, or musicians in, for instance ... well, Japan.

Last year, Tesda processed nearly 250,000 applicants. At a fee of P1,000 per applicant, the government gets a total of P250,000 every year—tops.

But for a little "consideration" of P20,000 to P30,000 per applicant, the syndicate can arrange an instant Tesda clearance.

Tesda issued more than 30,000 certificates last year. They could amount to something like P600 million to P900 million worth of, er, "consideration."

With that kind of a humongous racket, no wonder, the syndicate could not allow Liban just to go on as Tesda director general. The mother does not dance.

* * *

ONCE upon a time, before he became Tesda director general, when he was still a congressman for Quezon City, Liban actually authored the Tesda law.

In other words, he knows what Tesda is all about. He cannot be an eager-beaver, johnny-come-lately type in an agency which he himself conceived, in the first place.

To break the syndicate, therefore, Liban decided to get rid of the clearance BS at Tesda. He wanted to transfer it in the hands of private groups.

In fact, according to Tesda insiders, Liban already wrote Gloriaetta to propose the privatization of its clearance function.

After all, who can better judge if a person can sing and dance, or do whatever else, such as eating broken glass, than those who do the same things?

But Liban caught the ire of somebody who claims relations with a former senator. The mother owns a business which makes a lot of money from the clearance racket.

* * *

THIS cute administration's cappo di tutti cappi for taxation, Finance Secretary Jose Isidro "the Whiz" Camacho, is pushing for changes in the tax on vehicles.

Immediately, you could hear complaints from the car companies, and nobody knows if they got encouragement from Trade and Industry Secretary Mar Roxas.

Actually, the finance department has a good reason to change the tax system. The present rules on vehicle taxation are full of loopholes.

In taxation, as everybody knows, except perhaps Noli, loopholes simply mean some legitimate ways to cheat the government. In short, legal cheating!

For instance, the Bureau of Customs found out that Ford Philippines was declaring its imported vehicles just as "parts."

Now for parts, you pay the government only 3 to 10 percent in taxes, but for complete vehicles, you pay 30 percent. There's a big difference. Do the math.

* * *

TO counter the claim of the bureau, the boss of Ford Philippines, a certain Henry Co, reportedly said that it was an old issue and it was already resolved.

That is not true. Assuming that it's an old issue, it only goes to show that the car companies have been getting away with it for a long, long time now.

The thing is, old or new, the car companies are capable of cheating.

Even Ford's Co himself in effect admitted that his company paid the lower tax rate of 3 to 10 percent. He said Ford is a member of the car development program. Others in the program pay those rates. Thus, following his line, Ford is entitled to the same rates.

Precisely, Co forgot to say that "parts," or the so-called CKDs, have lower rates than the finished vehicles, or the CBUs. He also did not say that Ford actually brought in, for instance, Lynx from Taiwan.

To me it's an open admission that Ford used the loopholes, and we already said what loopholes in taxation actually are. Legal cheating!

* * *

YET the finance department spares the car companies from some tedious way to register imported vehicles, under Executive Order No. 142.

The order requires all those who bought imported vehicles, dating back two years, to get clearance from both the BIR and Customs.

That way, the government can check whether or not everybody paid the right amount of duties and taxes. Well and good!

The order nevertheless exempted all the car companies, which are actually the biggest importers of vehicles in this country, and which are actually also the biggest ... well, loophole users.

They are lobbying the government on the vehicle tax system. Unfortunately for us, they have a history of always getting what they want.

Well, they just tell Mar Roxas that they will no longer invest here, and—presto—the government gives in to their demand.

In other words, Tiong, the car companies will not invest here, if the government stops them from cheating. Great!

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Wednesday, February 5, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4.5	4.9	4.5	4.9	14,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	17,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	35.5	35.5	34.5	35	217,100
China Banking Corp.	635	635	635	635	710
Citystate Savings Bank	14.75	14.75	14.75	14.75	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	26.5	26.5	26	26	47,000
First E-Bank Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	40,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	30.5	30.5	30	30.5	7,500
Philippine National Bank	27	27	27	27	7,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	10	10	10	10	10,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	17.75	17.75	17.75	17.75	2,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	120,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1230	1260	1230	1260	740
Sun Life Financial Serv.	980	980	980	980	1,160
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	13	13	12.5	12.5	40,600
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.4	0.4	210,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	525	525	510	510	650
Ipeople Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	40,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026	200,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.014	0.015	0.014	0.015	600,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.19	0.19	0.185	0.185	1,910,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	290	290	285	287.5	67,230
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	19,300,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	8.8	8.9	8.7	8.7	12,000
Manila Electric Co. B	12.75	12.75	12.25	12.25	969,500
Petron Corp.	1.66	1.68	1.66	1.66	605,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1	1	1	1	410,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.54	1.54	1.54	1.54	25,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	209,000
Negros Navigation Co. Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.3	0.3	360,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	60,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	2,750,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.41	0.41	0.38	0.4	21,050,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.26	2.26	2.2	2.2	34,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	17	17	17	17	218,400
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	33	33	33	33	300
San Miguel Corp. A	56.5	56.5	56	56.5	24,400
San Miguel Corp. B	63.5	64	63	63.5	499,800
Vitarich Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	4.25	4.3	4.25	4.25	1,583,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.34	2.36	2.34	2.34	313,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	10,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	18,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	10,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	30,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.14	0.15	0.14	0.15	2,270,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	100,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	65,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	8.9	8.9	8.8	8.9	59,000
Ionics Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	10,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	201,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	1,000,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	170,000
Music Corp.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	1,160,000
Philtread Holdings Corp.	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	120,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.91	0.91	0.91	0.91	70,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.31	570,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. A	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	200,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	20,000
Matsushita Elec Phil Corp.	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.7	4,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	12.75	12.75	12.75	12.75	16,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	990,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.44	0.45	0.43	0.43	290,000
Mondragon Intl Phils. Inc.	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	1,300,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	12.75	12.75	12.25	12.25	72,100
Jollibee Warrants	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	53,300
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	7	7.6	7	7.6	43,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.9	5	4.9	5	5,574,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	70,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.14	0.145	0.14	0.14	460,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	330,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.96	0.97	0.96	0.97	1,820,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	4,122,000
MINING					
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1	1	1	1	600,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	200,000
Omico Corp.	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	5,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	410,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0022	0.0024	0.0022	0.0024	6,000,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	20,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	486,210	12,412,750.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	78,425,280	94,840,730.00
PRO	12,376,000	51,049,950.00
Mining	6,210,000	786,200.00
OIL	6,020,000	18,200.00
GRAND TOTALS :	103,517,490	159,107,830.00
AVERAGES		
Bank & Fin Svc	375.32	DOWN 7.04
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,471.90	DOWN 23.84
PRO	457.53	UP 4.35
Mining	1,268.98	UP 12.89
OIL	1.05	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	641.53	DOWN 3.84
Composite	1,037.26	DOWN 12.41

Japan firm stops auto glass production in RP factory

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

ASAHI Glass Co. Ltd. of Japan has stopped the production of automotive glass in its Philippine factory even though the giant glass maker dominates the local automotive market by supplying the tempered glass used in eight out of 10 vehicles sold in the country.

A source said Asahi had opted to import the tempered glass from its Thailand factory instead of manufacturing them here. He said the company has been consolidating its production of automotive glass in one country to serve the entire Asean region to achieve economies of scale.

Despite its dominant position, Asahi's local subsidiary, Asahi Glass Philippines, has been running its automotive glass line at 50 percent capacity largely because the Philippine automotive market was the only major Asean market that has yet to recover to pre-crisis levels.

The Japanese glass maker expect domestic sales to wither further with the onset of the Asean Free Trade Area which was expected to trigger the realignment of automotive manufacturing plants in the region.

With duties on all Asean-made products lowered to no more than 5 percent, local assemblers can directly import the automotive glass or bring completely built up vehicles from other Asean countries.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II confirmed that Asahi had indeed shut down its automotive glass production operations but stressed that it would be replaced by another line although he could not say the exact type. Aside from auto glass, Asahi produces float and flat glass and mirrors which the Japanese company will continue to produce in the country.

Roxas joined President Macapagal-Arroyo during her visit in Asahi's plant in Pasig City. The President crowed about Asahi's plan to increase its capital by P1.86 billion to P3.8 billion as a sign of confidence in the country. But Asahi said it would use the new money to pre-terminate its medium-term debt.

DISCLOSURES

INTERPHIL Laboratories Inc. purchased 81,000 of ILI shares at P1.90 per share and 1,000 of ILIB shares at P1.90 per share on February in line with its share buyback program.

* * *

THE BOARD of directors of **Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.** designated Susan T. Lee as its new chief finance officer.

* * *

UNION Cement Corp. disclosed the resignation of Alfred Schmid as adviser to the board of the company effective immediately.

* * *

GRAND Plaza Hotel Corp. designated the corporate secretary, Natividad B. Kwan, as the compliance officer of the corporation.

* * *

TANDUAY Holdings Inc. designated Ma. Cecilia L. Pesayco, corporate secretary, as the company's compliance officer. ***Compiled by Ray Leyesa, PDI Research***

ALI profit up 10% to P2.5B

AYALA Land Inc. posted a net income of P2.52 billion in 2002, 10 percent higher than its 2001 earnings, the company's report to the Securities and Exchange Commission showed.

In a disclosure, ALI said that the company's net income was generated from some P12.2 billion in consolidated revenue, 5 percent higher than the previous year's level.

The biggest source of the company's income came from its leasing operations, which contributed P3.33 billion and accounted for 27 percent of the total revenue. Leasing operations include rentals from shopping centers and office buildings.

ALI boasted of its buildings' high occupancy rate, at 92 percent which was higher than the average 85-percent occupancy rate in the entire Makati central business district.

New inclusions in the company's revenue sources are Greenbelt 2 and 3 which opened in May last year and a "value mall" near Fort Bonifacio, Market! Market!, which was opened in June. *Michelle Remo*

Siemens sues First Gas

By Doris C. Dumlao

GERMAN electronics and industrial conglomerate Siemens has filed with the International Chamber of Commerce a request for arbitration of its dispute with the Lopezes' First Gas Power Corp. involving non-payment of some $94.2 million for services rendered.

First Gas Power withheld payment of the amount due to delays in the completion of the 1,000-megawatt Sta. Rita gas plant.

But while Siemens had filed for damages over the Sta. Rita project, it had agreed to resolve a separate dispute over the 500-MW San Lorenzo plant also in Batangas by paying damages to the local company, according to a disclosure of First Gas parent firm First Philippine Holdings Corp.

FPHC spokesperson Ernesto Rufino Jr. told the Philippine Stock Exchange that the Siemens consortium—consisting of Siemens AG, Siemens Power Generation and Siemens Inc.—had filed for damages and likewise contested First Gas' decision to withhold $94.2 million worth of payments.

Under a turnkey engineering, procurement and construction contract dated December 1996, which was amended in July 1997, Siemens agreed to construct the Sta. Rita gas-fired power facility that would use the German firm's latest combined cycle gas turbine technology.

"Siemens and its subcontractors incurred delays in project completion, resulting in liquidated damages of approximately $99.3 million owing from Siemens to First Gas under the contract," Rufino said.

Given this situation and pursuant to the contract, Rufino said First Gas withheld about $94.2 million from its milestone payments to Siemens.

In Siemens' request for arbitration, it claimed that First Gas was not entitled to any liquidated damages and that First Gas had no remedy for the delay in the completion of the Sta. Rita plant. Siemens also sought additional amounts for time-related costs, non-time related costs, overhead and profit, and finance charges.

"First Gas plans to contest vigorously all of Siemen's claims including those claims seeking recovery of amounts withheld under the contract as liquidated damages," Rufino said.

He added that First Gas would seek the additional amount of $5.1 million owed by Siemens in liquidated damages as well as additional amounts in counterclaims against Siemens.

CURRENCIES

Feb. 5, 2003

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	0.918274	1.000000	53.937000
Japan	Yen	0.007675	0.008358	0.450800
United Kingdom	Pound	1.514784	1.649600	88.974500
Hongkong	Dollar	0.117735	0.128213	6.915400
Switzerland	Franc	0.682275	0.742997	40.075000
Canada	Dollar	0.606362	0.660328	35.616100
Singapore	Dollar	0.528655	0.575705	31.051800
Australia	Dollar	0.542234	0.590493	31.849400
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.435869	2.652661	143.076600
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.244886	0.266681	14.384000
Brunei	Dollar	0.527138	0.574053	30.962700
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000104	0.000113	0.006100
Thailand	Baht	0.021515	0.023430	1.263700
UAE	Dirham	0.250040	0.272294	14.686700
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.089000	58.737400
ArgentinaPeso	0.290593	0.316456	17.068700	
Brazil	REAL	0.257870	0.280820	15.146600
Denmark	Kroner	0.134457	0.146424	7.897700
India	Rupee	0.019243	0.020956	1.130300
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.241683	0.263193	14.195800
Mexico	New Peso	0.083941	0.091412	4.930500
New Zealand	Dollar	0.503660	0.548486	29.583700
Norway	Kroner	0.133054	0.144896	7.815300
Pakistan	Rupee	0.015792	0.017197	0.927600
South Africa	Rand	0.110959	0.120834	6.517400
Korea	Won	0.000781	0.000851	0.045900
Sweden	Kroner	0.108190	0.117819	6.354800
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Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.026486	0.028843	1.555700
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000478	0.000521	0.028100

SEC releases draft SPAV law implementing rules, regulations

By Michelle V. Remo

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission released on Tuesday the draft implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of the Republic Act No. 9182 or the Special Purpose Vehicle Act.

SEC Chair Lilia Bautista said that the draft IRR was now ready for consultation with interested parties, including the Bankers' Association of the Philippines and the private sector.

The IRR tasked the Department of Finance to oversee government-owned and -controlled corporations' dealings with special purpose vehicles; the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas for banks licensed to perform quasi-banking operations like the Land Bank of the Philippines and the Development Bank of the Philippines, and the SEC for financing companies and investment houses except for their trust and quasi-banking operations.

The rules also identified the functions and powers of special purpose vehicles to include operation, collection and disposal of non-performing assets and the restructuring of non-performing loans acquired from financial institutions.

To qualify as a special purpose vehicle, an entity must be registered as a stock corporation with the SEC. It should also have a minimum authorized capital stock of P500 million, a minimum subscribed capital stock of P125 million and a minimum paid-up capital of P31.25 million.

Transactions between a financial institution and an SPV would be granted tax exemptions and other privileges such as exemption from payment of documentary stamp tax, capital gains tax and creditable withholding income tax.

After consultation with concerned agencies, the draft IRR will be forwarded to the BSP and will be submitted to the congressional oversight committee for approval.

The enactment of the Special Purpose Vehicle Act into law is seen to address the problems of the financial sector, particularly the growing non-performing loans and assets of the industry. It is also hoped to develop the financial sector and to improve the liquidity in the financial system.

GSIS floats land-for-dues plan

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE GOVERNMENT Service Insurance System is proposing that the national government use prime real estate instead of cash to pay close to P14 billion in past due premium contributions and interest.

"We have not received a reaction because we have just made some overtures (to the government). We plan to formalize that (payment-with-land proposal)," GSIS president and chief executive Winston Garcia said in a news conference yesterday.

The GSIS is hoping to be in an even more secure situation by collecting dues that the national government owes, which have hit P14 billion.

The state-run pension fund incurred an actuarial deficit of around P25.167 billion because of the government's failure to pay its debts and the lower value of its stock market investments.

The "actuarial deficit" reflects the "insufficiency" of the GSIS' assets to meet future contingent liabilities to its members in the very long term.

Garcia stressed that the figure had nothing to do with the GSIS' financial condition, profitability or liquidity to finance its present operations.

The actuarial deficit is "temporary" and will be covered up as soon as the national government, through the Department of Budget and Management, settles P14 billion in unpaid premium contributions and legal surcharges and penalties and when the market price of the fund's stock investments improved, he said.

Among the properties that the GSIS is considering in its payment-with-land proposal are those up for privatization, Garcia said.

Garcia said the pension fund was particularly interested in the 100-hectare Food Terminal Inc. property and the 4.5-hectare lot that used to house the International School in Makati.

Earlier this week, the Macapagal administration said it was sitting on more than P50 billion worth of real estate and equity assets it could sell starting this year to substantially reduce its budget deficit.

"The GSIS is confident that by the time it has to comply with its obligations in the future, in 20 to 25 years, these temporary situations will have been positively addressed," Garcia said.

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GSIS to buy land for embassies, consulates

THE GOVERNMENT Service and Insurance System and the Department of Foreign Affairs are set to sign this month a memorandum of agreement that will allow the GSIS to set aside as much as P5 billion to acquire properties overseas that the DFA may use to house its embassies and consulates under a lease-purchase program.

"This (project) will allow us to get a return higher than what we are getting from government securities," GSIS president and chief executive Winston Garcia said in a news briefing yesterday.

The pension fund will acquire properties in those countries where the DFA still pays rents for its facilities, he said.

"We are eyeing 20 to 25 countries in mature economies, principally in Europe, some parts in America and Asia," Garcia said.

"We are in the final stages of negotiation. (We can sign) anytime this month," he added.

Elena R. Torrijos

Manulife says RP business grew 29% to P390M

MANULIFE Philippines, the country's fourth largest life insurer, reported yesterday that its total sales from its life and pre-need businesses grew 29 percent last year to P390 million from the previous year.

In a statement, Manulife Philippines president and chief executive Renato Vergel de Dios described the growth as "a respectable achievement despite a difficult economic backdrop."

Vergel de Dios also said the company reached its target of increasing its agency force to 1,000 full-time life insurance agents, exclusive of those that were absorbed from CMG.

In October last year, Manulife Philippines purchased CMG Life and CMG Plans from the Commonwealth Bank of Australia.

The 2002 sales figure reported by Manulife Philippines follows Canada's generally accepted accounting principles but does not reflect the new business obtained from the acquisition.

In a briefing late last month, Vergel de Dios disclosed that the life insurer plans to expand to the Central and Southern Luzon areas.

It would also try to more than double its sales force to 5,000 agents in its bid to become the third largest life insurer in the country in two years.

Bourse bans Tibayan shares in Prudential

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange banned yesterday the trading of shares held by the Tibayan group in Prudential Bank following a cease-and-desist order issued by the Securities and Exchange Commission.

In a memorandum, PSE president Ernest Leung informed brokers that trading of shares held by the Tibayan group was prohibited until further notice from the SEC.

"The commission is in the process of preserving whatever assets still exist of said group o' corporations," Leung said.

SEC records show Tibayan has bought about 700,000 shares of Prudential Bank amounting to about P600 million through the following companies: TG Investment Co. Inc., Tibayan Management Group International Holdings Co. Ltd. and Cielo Azul Holdings Corp.

The SEC shut down the Tibayan group last week for its alleged involvement in the fraudulent Ponzi scheme.

All bank accounts of the group have already been frozen by the Anti-Money Laundering Council.

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Dolphy joins celebration of World Children's Day at McDonald's

THERE are perhaps a hundred and one reasons to indulge in a chunky, mouthwatering Big Mac – or a crispy, golden brown Chicken McDo. It could be a family day, a get-together, a closed deal, or simply a filling reward after a long day. Just recently, McDonald's gave burger buffs one more reason to give in to their cravings – a good cause.

It was a fun date with Ronald McDonald as over a hundred countries celebrated the first World Children's Day at McDonald's.

World Children's Day at McDonalds, a global fundraising initiative for the benefit of the Ronald McDonald House of Charities (RMHC), was held in a bid to help alleviate the living condition of children in their communities all over the world.

It really didn't matter if you were in McDonald's California, McDonald's Europe, McDonald's Session Road in Baguio or just any of the McDonald's branches worldwide. Aside from enjoying their favorite McDo meal, store guests who visited the restaurant joined this worldwide celebration.

Filipinos had their fare share of all fun and festivities. For only P5, store customers were able to purchase a Christmas tree ornament at the restaurant counter. On which they are to write their wish – or wishes for the season and hang it on McDonald's Wishing Tree. A percentage of which will be given to the Ronald McDonald House of Charities.

At Greenbelt, the McDonald's shining happy team and restaurant customers were delighted by an unusual visit. Comedy king Dolphy, having alighted from his vehicle came walking inside the store to participate in the celebration. It was quite impossible no to have been star-struck to watch the Philippines well-loved Dolphy approach the counter.

Celebrity sightings also included one of television's notable telenovela queens Eula Valdes. "I really didn't know that daddy will also be here," she said, referring to Dolphy. "I just saw him when he was about to come in."

Together, Dolphy and Eula thoughtfully scribbled their one wish for the season and later on hung their ornament on a fine spot on the McDonald's Wishing Tree.

You don't bump into local celebrities at McDo everyday. Likewise, it is not everyday that you get a chance to do much for children – in the Philippines – or the world. Those who celebrated the World Children's Day at McDonald's seemed to have had the rare opportunity to experience both.

NOKIA THROWS BASH FOR DEALERS

Mobile phone leader Nokia recently threw a hat-themed party to celebrate the end of a very successful year for Nokia and their valued dealers. Held at the Hotel Intercon, hat-wearing guests were treated to a night of entertainment and fun with games, face painting, kiddie food carts and dancing. Mimes and clowns were also on hand to complete the hat-themed party of the night. A lucky draw of the latest Nokia phones capped the night. Photo shows Jing Desantos of Semicon (center) receiving his brand new 7210 after his Christmas tree hat won the best hat contest. Posing with him are the other finalists (from left) Marijo Garrucho of Digitel, Noel Cortez of Globe, Leonard Villalon of Semicon and Lizanne Uychaco of Globe along with hosts TJ Manotoc (extreme left) and Regine Tolentino (extreme right). Awarding the prizes are Nokia mobile phones country general manager Parikshit Bhasin (3rd from right) and Noel Oribello, Nokia mobile phones business controller (2nd from right).

88.3 CITYLITE SUPPORTS NDSAP

Ms Pinky Aseron, manager of 88.3 Citylite donates P50,000 to the fund-raising golf tournament of the Down Syndrome Association entitled 'Tee-up for Downs' on Feb. 7 at the Valley Golf and Country Club in Antipolo. Tee-off time is from 6 to 8 a.m. 88.3 Citylite will be giving away CDs to players who make a birdie at hole no. 1 of the executive course. Photo shows the special kids – Melissa Warren, Clarissa Ortiz and Ninette Davadilla with Mrs Nenita Davadilla, Malu Tiongzon-Ortiz, (chair, DSAPI golf tournament) and Ms Pinky Aseron of 88.3 Citylite.

Preference for Touch Mobile traced to good network quality

TOUCH Mobile, the country's fastest growing GSM brand preferred by Filipino families, proves to be a truly dependable network as it provides nationwide, seamless coverage, clear calls and quick connections.

Consumer studies conducted recently show that good network quality, a feature once considered by subscribers as a mere bonus, now seems to be the major gauge of satisfaction and dissatisfaction among cellular subscribers.

Compared to its competitors and other upcoming networks that charge high call rates but whose subscribers experience frequent dropped or failed calls and poor or no signal, satisfied Touch Mobile subscribers can attest to their network's superiority. They express high satisfaction ratings on network coverage, speed of sending text messages, and clarity of calls.

With its very affordable flat rate of P6.50 for voice calls and more than 2,000 cellsites nationwide, Touch Mobile provides clearer coverage, which reaches out, represents, and covers subscribers around the country.

It has also embarked on a pervasive, nationwide network roll-out campaign, starting with the installation and upgrade of more new cellsites in areas such as Batangas, Pampanga, Bulacan, La Union, Baguio, Davao del Sur and Cotabato.

On top of its unparalleled voice value added service such as voice information, voice messaging and the unique karaoke service that caters to Filipino families, Touch Mobile also offers other family-oriented features such as special icons and ringtones reflective of Filipino values and traditions.

Powered by Globe Telecom, Touch Mobile is moving this year to capture the regional areas and expand its network and service presence all over Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

GAERLAN

LITTAUA

PHILAM PLANS ANNOUNCES NEW EXECUTIVES

Pre-need leader Philam Plans proudly announced two of its newly appointed executives. Effective Jan. 2, Roland U. Gaerlan joined the company as its new first vice president for sales and marketing. Gaerlan brings with him an expertise in sales and marketing, having served marketing positions starting from Procter & Gamble Philippines, Van Melle Inc. and Metro Drug Distribution Inc. Prior to Philam Plans he served under the mobile communications group of Globe Telecom Inc. He is joined by Francis Joseph E. Littaua. From senior assistant vice president and head of Manila north sales division, Littaua is now vice president and head of the Manila north sales division. As one of the company's brightest sales executives, Littaua was able to lead his division to give a significant contribution to the company's sales targets in the past year. The two executives belong to Philam Plans' professional management team. steering the pre-need company to maintain its leading position over the industry.

Awards
The GRAND TRIBUTE to ACHIEVERS

EIGHT O'CLOCK BAGS AWARD

Eight O'Clock Orange Drink Mix was named the country's Top Juice Brand of the Year in the 19th Annual Year-Ender Consumer Excellence Awards. Established in 1983, the annual awards honor outstanding consumer products, services, business entities and manufacturers 'which have served the well-being of the general public.' Eight O'Clock Orange Drink Mix is part of the Coca-Cola Company's diverse product portfolio in the Philippines, ranging from carbonated soft drinks to powdered and ready-to-drink fruit juice drinks, packaged mineral and distilled waters, and sports drinks. Photo shows The Coca-Cola Company Philippines Division powdered juice category manager Joyce Misa (center) receiving the award. Others in photo are (from left): Who's Who in the Philippines chair Jonathan Navea, awards committee research and nomination chair Lolita Mirpuri, committee special projects director Esperanza Robel and awards co-chair Dean Amelia Mapagu.

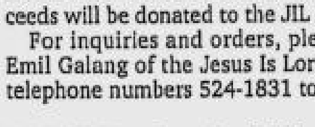
Pana 2003 officers and board of directors

THE PHILIPPINE Association of National Advertisers (Pana) wishes to announce its new set of officers and board of directors for the year 2003.

Elected were president Carminia B. Rodriguez of Citibank, N.A.; vice president Jones T. Campos of Globe Telecom; secretary Susie Achacoso-Cruz of Godiva Inc.; treasurer A.G. Alcantara Jr. of Asia Brewery Inc.; auditor Fortunato D. Babasa of The Andresons Group Inc.; PRO Sandra D. Garcia of Shangri-La Plaza Corporation. The new board of directors are Raul S. Alvarez of Philippine Long Distance Company; Sandra C. Puno of Nestlé Philippines Inc.; Emilio L. Samson Jr. of McDonald's Philippines; Angelica P. Suiza of Adidas Philippines and Gina R. Virtusio of Superferry.

The induction of the officers and board of directors coincided with the association's 1st General Membership Meeting last Jan. 31, at 12 p.m. at the Maynila Restaurant of The Manila Hotel. The inducting officer and guest speaker was Senate President Franklin Drilon.

Jesus Is Lord PLDT Touch Card



IN CELEBRATION of Jesus Is Lord Church's 25 years of bringing the Gospel to people from all over the world, JIL in partnership with PLDT has come out with a Jesus Is Lord silver edition PLDT Touch Card. Proceeds will be donated to the JIL Foundation.

For inquiries and orders, please contact Emil Galang of the Jesus Is Lord Church at telephone numbers 524-1831 to 34.

PLDT Enchanted Kingdom Touch Card

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GREAT news. The special edition PLDT Enchanted Kingdom Touch Card will be honored at the Enchanted Kingdom until March 31. Magic is still definitely here.

DUSIT HOTEL NIKKO DONATES TO CHARITY

The rooms division of Dusit Hotel Nikko led by Napoleon Leono, director of rooms, organized a very successful rooms' division Christmas party for The Children of Settlement House in Paco, Manila recently. Manager and staff from front office and housekeeping departments attended the heartwarming event. They prepared a special party with lots of party food, clowns, games, gifts and prizes. They also donated food, old clothes, milk, school supplies to give simple joys for these disadvantaged and underprivileged children. Photo shows Dusit Hotel Nikko rooms division managers and staff with Dusit director of rooms Nap Leono (seated 2nd from right) at The Children of the Settlement House Christmas party.

BOMBO RADYO HOLDS TLMC 2003

Bombo Radyo Philippines, the number 1 radio network in the country, just concluded its annual Top Level Management Conference (TLMC) 2003 at the famed Asian Institute of Management Conference Center in Makati City last Jan. 2 to 6. The conference, which had the theme, 'A.R.T.' an acronym for Advanced Radio Technology, was participated in by the network's officers and top executives of its 43-strong Bombo Radyo and Star FM stations nationwide and was graced by no less than the network's president and CEO Rogelio M. Florete who delivered his state of the network address. It was a rigorous strategic planning session which tackled mostly on new and innovative ways to cope with the present harsh economic environment and to continue the dominance of the network in the radio industry in terms of maintaining airwave supremacy, technological advancement, and the constant training of its people.

MILO RECEIVES LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Milo, the Olympic Energy Drink, was recently awarded by the Philippine Sportswriters Association the Lifetime Achievement Award for its continuing support in promoting sports to Filipino youths. Milo holds annual sports spectacles such as the Milo Best, the National Milo Marathon, the Milo SBP-Passerelle, the Milo Junior Tennis Cup the Milo Little Olympics, and the Milo Sports Clinic. Milo has been earnestly advocating a healthy and active lifestyle through sports instruction for decades now. Receiving the award from Manila Times assistant sports editor Manny Angeles are Milo sports executive Pat Goc-ong and Publicis-AMA IMC director Ronald Barreiro.

Product FILES

New sporty 4-Stroke motorcycle from Suzuki

SUZUKI Philippines Inc. recently launched the new Suzuki Smash, a four-stroke underbone motorcycle with kick and electric start features offering superior styling comfort, and performance designed to meet the needs of and expectations of today's riders.

The Smash is equipped with a set of features to ensure good maneuverability and handling in various road situations. Its electric starter starts its engine with the touch of a button, while its rotary transmission allows the rider to shift straight from fourth gear to neutral instead of shifting down through first gear, ensuring quick and easy starting of the Smash. The light, rigid frame of the Smash displays an outstanding combination of lightweight and high torsional rigidity. And though fuel efficient, the Smash is equipped with a large, 4.5-liter fuel tank that gives a long cruising range and reduces the risk of running out of fuel during long rides. Adaptable to various road surfaces, the Smash has a minimum ground clearance of 140 mm and a good measure of suspension.

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NOTICE OF LOSS

NOTICE is hereby given that the Alien Certificate of Registration of **MR. ERIC WAI MING NGAI**, Hong Kong national, was lost January 16, 2003 after his bag containing the same was left behind in a taxi he took on his way to the airport.

A substantial reward shall be given for the return of the said document, with no further questions asked. The finder of the above document may contact Telephone No. 894-03-10.

(PDI--Feb. 6, 2003)

PUBLIC NOTICES

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Notice is hereby given regarding the loss of Summit Publishing Company Inc. O.R. #s 6851-6900 and P.R. #s 4951-5000 and SH Publications Inc. O.R. #s 3501-3550 and P.R. #s 01951-02000. Any transactions covered these shall be dishonored by the companies mentioned.

Notice is hereby given that BOI Certificate of Registration No. 85-1045 under the name of World Imports (Phils) was lost.
(PDI-Feb. 6, 2003)

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THANK YOU FOR BEING THE BEST WIFE AND MOTHER IN THE WORLD.
HAPPY BIRTHDAY!
LOVE, ANTHONY AND KIDS, PAULINE, CATHERINE, CHRISTINE, CELINE, ANNE, JOHN.

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Pambansang Pangasiwaan ng Patubig
(National Irrigation Administration)
Lungsod ng Quezon

INVITATION TO BID

ONE (1) UNIT HYDRAULIC WALKING EXCAVATOR FOR MALITUBOG-MARIDAGAO IRRIGATION PROJECT
BID NO. MMIP-039-03

The Philippine Government has obtained a loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) for the prosecution of the Malitubog-Maridagao Irrigation Project (PH-P112). Part of the Loan shall be used to procure eligible expenditure as follows:

One (1) unit Hydraulic Walking Excavator
Wheel type 0.30 cu. m. (min.) capacity with engine power of 75 HP (min.)

The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) as the Implementing Agency of the Project invites eligible bidders to participate in the tender in accordance with the procurement guidelines of the JBIC. Interested bidders may obtain bid documents starting 12 February 2003 at the Procurement Division, Ground Floor, NIA Bldg., Diliman, Quezon City, Tel. No. 921-3906 and upon payment of non-refundable amount of Two Thousand Pesos (P2,000.00).

Bids must be delivered and shall be publicly opened on 20 February 2003, 2:00 PM at the Conference Room of the Systems Operation and Equipment Management, 4th Floor, IEC Bldg., NIA Complex, Quezon City.

All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security equivalent to at least 2% of the total bid price. Bid security shall be in the form of Bank Draft/Guarantee/ Irrevocable Letter of Credit, Cash, Cashier's Check, Manager's Check or any combination thereof.

Delivery of the goods must be before the closing date of the loan on 11 May 2003. Payment shall be made by Transfer Procedure of the JBIC.

The NIA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, declare the bidding a failure or waive any or all informalities or to award such bids to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous and shall meet the closing date of the loan

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Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

ROBERTO YULO GARCIA

wish to express our heartfelt gratitude
and sincerest appreciation to all those
who offered Masses and prayers,
sent flowers and messages of sympathy,
and who in countless ways, condoled
with and comforted us in our hour
of bereavement.

ALBERTO C. CORONA

Peacefully joined our Lord and
*his father **Jose Corona** on 03 February 2003.*

His loving wife **Miriam**; daughters **Anna Mabel, KC** and son **AJ**; mother **Aurora**; brothers **Ben, Ome, Rey, Rico, Ompong, Fred, Pepito**; sisters **Emy, Marit, Lulu, Puring, Pacing**; in-laws, nephews, nieces, grandchildren, all relatives and friends are assured by the promise of God of eternal life.

His body lies in his residence at St. Joseph Village, Tanauan City, Batangas.

Interment will be on Saturday, February 08, 2003 at Himlayan, Tanauan City after the 1:00 p.m. Holy Mass at St. John Evangelist Church, Tanauan City, Batangas.

ANDREA C. SOLANO

Died peacefully on February 4, 2003 at the age of 60.

She is survived by her children **Orlando & Joyce Solano, Cindy & Carlo Medina, Chona C. Solano & Christopher C. Solano**; grandchildren, brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Golden Gate Chapel, Golden Gate Subdivision, Las Piñas City.

Interment will be on Saturday, February 8, 2003 at the Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque City after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

"Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it much as dawned on man what God has prepared for those who love Him."
I Corinthians 2:9

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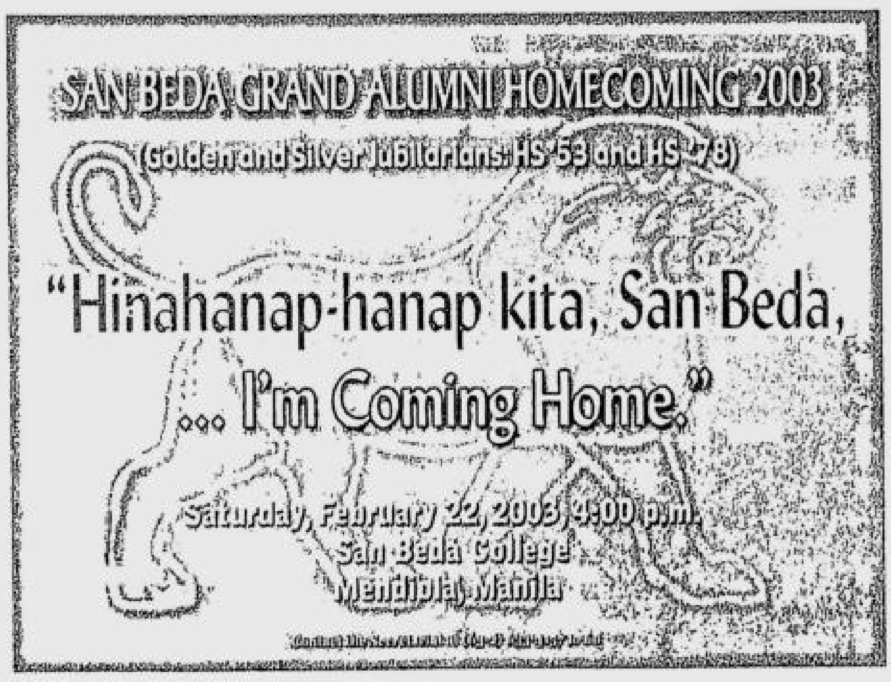

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Sweet Nothings

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Red
size: 1 col x 4 cm

Valentine's like you, Trish, don't come along everyday. I love you. – Paul
size: 3 lines

My heart beats for you and only for you, Tim. This Valentine's day, let's paint the town red – Mimi
size: 4 lines

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MOTORING

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

How to get 30.8 km per liter

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

WITH WAR in the Middle East looming and oil prices going up every month, motorists are seeking ways to reduce fuel consumption. There are dire predictions that when war breaks out in Iraq, which is the world's second biggest oil producer after Saudi Arabia, the price of crude will soar to US$50 per barrel. Owners of big sport utility vehicles are particularly worried since SUVs are notorious gas guzzlers.

This is probably why, when I wrote last month ("The Family-Friendly Trooper," Jan. 9) that the Isuzu Trooper 4x2 averaged 30.8 kilometers per liter of diesel fuel in a recent economy run, a reader e-mailed me the same day wanting to know how he could achieve the same fuel economy with his 2002 Trooper 4x2. The reader wrote that ever since he acquired the Trooper, he has never attained that high mileage. He only averaged seven to eight kilometers per liter in city driving while his average for long trips was nine to 10 km/liter.

Since I did not participate in Isuzu Philippines Corp.'s (IPC) economy run last year, having been out of the country at the time, I referred the reader's question to IPC's Customer Relations Team. Here is IPC's answer, verbatim:

"The 30.822 km/liter posted by the Isuzu Trooper during the Isuzu Challenge 02 and subsequently communicated in print came about with mechanics set by IPC for this particular marketing event—that each Isuzu vehicle entry (there were four categories) will only carry one driver and one passenger, that economy run tips given to participants were general (i.e., removing excess baggage and unnecessary weights from the vehicle, discourage fiddling of the vehicle's engine or any of its mechanical parts), that each vehicle's gas tank was filled full, then topped up to the brim and sealed at the starting line, that all participating vehicles' fuel efficiency was based on an absolute distance of 89.6 km divided by the amount of fuel refueled at the end of the route, that proceedings of the event were witnessed by representatives of the Consumer Union of the Philippines, Road Transport Planning Division of the Department of Transportation and Communication (DOTC), and the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. (Campi). Further, our print communication materials were cleared with the Advertising Board of the Philippines (AdBoard) prior to newspaper insertion.

"In this case, the excellent fuel consumption rating was achieved under relatively controlled situations. While they may not happen in usual driving conditions here in the Philippines, the message we are trying to convey in our communication materials is that these figures (including the other Isuzu vehicles that participated) are not entirely impossible as they were achieved, documented and verified."

What, no airbag?

Another reader, commenting on the same column, asked why, for a "whopping" price of P1.59 million, the Trooper does not have an airbag, which is standard in the United States. "It's almost unethical not to install one," wrote this reader. "Forget the leather, the woodgrain and the skyroof. I want safety."

I forwarded the safety-conscious reader's comment to IPC and got this reply: "Based on current Philippine applications (i.e. driving practices, road conditions), the SRS airbag intended for the Isuzu Trooper was deemed not yet necessary by IPC management. Its design has limitations that make it less ideal in serving the purpose of reinforcing safety. Among other examples of the above-mentioned would be the prevalence of reckless drivers and the pothole-infested road network in and out of major thoroughfares, which taken into consideration, are potent stimuli of 'premature' airbag deployment.

"In addition, the Isuzu Trooper's Ladder Frame Structure protects the whole assembly from the force of impact in the unlikely event of crashing onto another vehicle or the like. It is also equipped with an Anti-lock Brake System (ABS), a proactive system that enables maneuverability even during extreme braking conditions.

"Therefore, the Isuzu Trooper, together with its other safety features like the seat belts, is still dependable even when safety and security are put to a test."

Incidentally, while the Trooper has ABS but no airbag, its competitors the Ford Expedition XLT (P1.95 million) has two airbags and ABS, the Nissan Patrol 4500 LE (P1.95 million) has one airbag and no ABS, while the Mitsubishi Pajero (P1.5 million) has one airbag and no ABS.

***

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: I don't approve of political jokes... I've seen too many of them get elected.

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E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph.

NEW BIR REGULATION

Is an AUV worth P1M more, SUV over P3M?

By Tessa R. Salazar

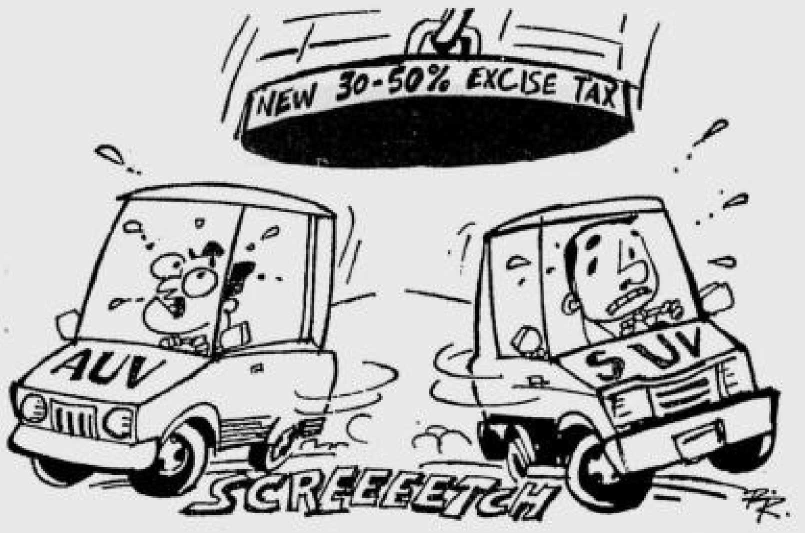


ILLUSTRATION: RAUL REQUE

WOULD you still buy a Revo, Adventure or a Crosswind for P1.4 million? Would you still buy a Trooper for P2.5 million or an Expedition worth P3.56 million?

The recently published BIR Revenue Regulation 4-2003 could jack up the prices of Asian utility vehicles (AUVs) and sport utility vehicles (SUVs) by that much. The new BIR revenue regulation, if implemented, would slap a 35- to 50-percent tax on all AUVs and SUVs, depending on engine displacement.

Estimated price increase

The Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. (Campi) noted the auto industry's estimated price increase for AUVs, ranging from P230,000 to P325,000, SUV price increase to be about P1.5 million to P2 million, and passenger vans from P350,000 to P500,000.

In case the new regulation pushes through, TMA president Elizabeth H. Lee revealed the price estimates of some SUVs. She said the Nissan Patrol's current suggested retail price of P1.86 million will increase by 50 percent to P2.79 million. The P1.47-million Pajero will increase to P2.2 million. An Expedition worth P1.78 million, she said, will increase to P3.56 million since this has 100 percent excise because of higher engine displacement.

With the imposition of excise tax on AUVs at the current rates of 35 percent to 50 percent, Campi cited that the impact would immediately be felt by at least 40 percent of the market, which was the AUV share of the 2002 market.

Potential revenue loss

If RR 4-2003 would be implemented, Campi is projecting that the potential total revenue loss of the government would be more than P1.3 billion covering just the period from Feb. 16 to June 2003 translating to an average monthly revenue loss of more than P377 million.

Also cited would be "erosion of local parts purchases, further loss of employment, exacerbation of the unutilized plant facilities and loss of investor confidence due to disruption of their mid-term and long-term plans as a result of the ever-changing policy environment.

Toyota Motors Philippines said the proposed BIR regulation could only mean AUVs would be priced prohibitively above the P1-million mark, and buying SUVs would just become "a dream."

Daniel M. Isla, Toyota Motor Philippines Corp. first vice president for marketing, said this in the midst of BIR's pending two revenue regulations tightening the excise tax exemption privilege given to 10-seater vehicles.

Isuzu Philippines, on the other hand, said the current suggested retail prices of its various AUVs and the SUV Trooper would most likely be slapped with the 50-percent excise tax as a result of the BIR regulation.

The Crosswind XUVi automatic transmission priced at P969,000, for instance, will shoot up to P1,453,500 and the Crosswind XL at P700,000 will be priced at P1,050,000. The Trooper A/T, already priced at P1,649,000 will sell for P2,473,500.

"Please note that these are indicative prices, meaning we just assumed that everything will stay the same (costs, margins, exchange rates) so it could still change should the RR be finally implemented. I think they just added the 50-percent tax and adjusted the VAT," said Myrna Gonzales, Isuzu Philippines senior manager for corporate affairs.

Appeal

The Truck Manufacturers Association appealed Feb. 3 to the Department of Finance to suspend the implementation of the revenue regulation until the new excise tax law is passed.

The TMA said in its letter to Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho that the immediate implementation of the regulation would be "extremely disruptive to the auto industry." The new revenue regulation is said to prevent any possibility of effecting a relatively smooth transition.

Currently, the industry is facing a transition within the next several months until the Congress passes a new law. Previously exempt commercial vehicles, which comprise 75 percent of the local market, will now be subjected to a two-phase price adjustment—the existing engine-based excise tax structure and the proposed value-based system.

The combined effects of the two within the same year are predicted to result in a serious setback for all truck assemblers. During this period, it is predicted that there will be a drastic reduction in the importation, production and sale of vehicles.

Lee said the industry may even experience an industry-wide production slowdown that would have serious consequences on the financial health of all assemblers, local parts suppliers, dealers and, ultimately, all direct and indirect workers serving the industry.

BEETLEMANIA

A love they lost and found

Text and photos by Charles E. Buban

FOR A TIME the Classic Beetle has become some sort of an icon here in our country. With its hip, anti-snob appeal, the Beetle was loved by Filipinos like others all over the world.

But when Volkswagen stopped producing it in 1978 in Germany, the love affair was cut short. A number of them decided to restore a Volkswagen or buy a restored one.

Others waited—and prayed—until the Classic Beetle becomes available once again.

Perseverance paid off

Somehow their perseverance paid off when car dealership Hancars AutoCenter on Quezon Avenue decided last year to import virtual copies of the 1979 Classic Beetle, which is now exclusively manufactured in Mexico.

And the bug, with its trademark air-cooled rear-mounted engine, has indeed returned to our streets from its more than 20 years of absence in the Philippine market.

The INQUIRER met some of these brand-new Classic Beetle lovers and told their story why they still preferred the "People's Car" despite the presence of other modern equipped cars.

First buyer

It was some sort of luck that Mon Mateo chanced upon an ad about a brand-new Classic Beetle being sold.

"At first, I was doubtful so I dropped by Hancars office and indeed, it was the Classic with everything inside all brand new," said Mateo, who now is retired and into the Classic Beetle restoring business.

He related that whenever his clients see his bright red Classic Beetle, they think it was restored. "I have a hard time convincing them," he added.

Mateo used to own a dark blue 1964 model back in the '70s. "But I sold it planning I could buy a new one. But as chance would have it, production was stopped and suddenly the Classic Beetle became a collector's item."

VILLAVICENCIO loves anything sentimental, naturally a Classic Beetle is on his list of collections.

According to Mateo, his new Classic Beetle feels no different from his last one. But of course, he did add several accessories that make his new Classic Beetle a topic of conversation wherever he goes.

From one generation to the next

Kenneth Ku of Webcor Construction just love driving his father's new Classic Beetle. "It's bright yellow so it's a head turner. I would prefer a darker hue but my father insisted on its color," he said.

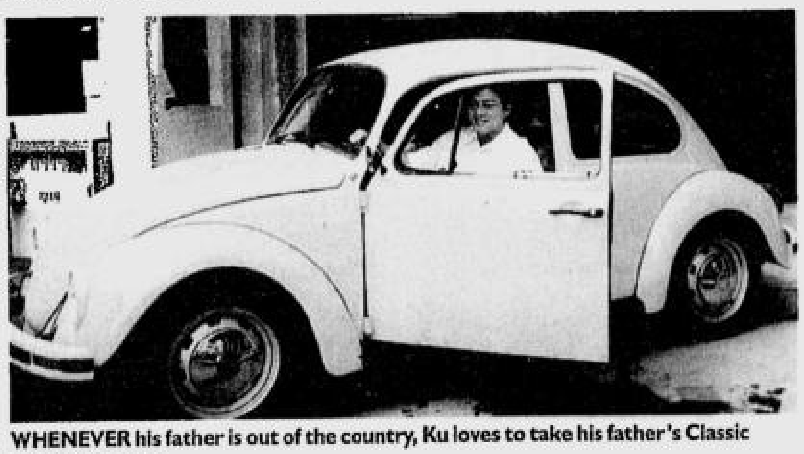
His father Lorenzo, now 67, used to own a similarly colored Classic Beetle. Lorenzo's attachment with his car began when he was side-swiped by a train while driving one night in Valenzuela many years ago.

"According to his story which he loves to tell again and again, they rolled three times until it hit an electrical post. It was gruesome just hearing about it yet my father and uncle came out of it unscathed," Kenneth related.

"So you can just imagine his gladness when he heard about Hancars' new product and immediately called up its general manager, Webin Dy Manzana.

Since then, Ku said, his father would only allow him to drive it when he goes out of the country. "He even drove it when going out of town."

MATEO loves to accesorize so he transformed his Classic Beetle into something that reflects his sporty personality.



WHENEVER his father is out of the country, Ku loves to take his father's Classic Beetle for a spin.

Lover of anything classic

Ramon Villavicencio, who owns more than 70 Flying V gas stations nationwide, is somebody you would call a classics lover.

"I'm more of a sentimentalist: I prefer old songs and love to collect antiques," said Villavicencio who even has an antique telephone and cash register displayed in his Mandaluyong City office.

Naturally, he also owns a Classic Beetle although it's brand new already. "I don't like a restored one since I can't use it as often as I want. I like driving around," Villavicencio revealed.

He used to drive a secondhand Classic Beetle, which is actually a company vehicle assigned to him.

"I always love to buy one for myself," Villavicencio related. "But when I already raised the money, the car was no longer sold in the market. I'm just glad somebody thought of bringing it back here."

LANCER 2003

More than skin-deep transformation

By Tessa R. Salazar

AFTER YEARS of one facelift to another, the new Lancer has finally ceased to become just another skin-deep transformation. It has been six years since a new Lancer has been introduced. In 1999, the Lancer with the Invecs came in but since then, Lancer's transformation involved only "facelifts."

The Lancer 2003 is now taller, wider and longer than its predecessor.˙ Its turning radius is smaller—4.9 meters. The top end variant MX models even have soft leather upholstery.

That's the skin-deep facelift.

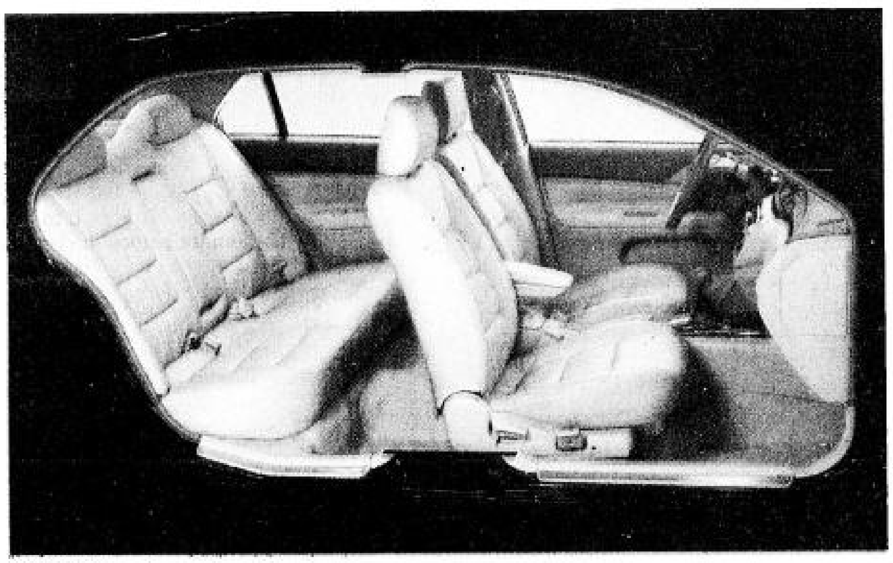
Transmission technology

Here's the clincher: the transmission technology involved.

Mitsubishi Philippines flaunts the so-called Continuously Variable Transmission or CVT for the automatic transmission, which is, for now, considered a cut above the rest compared to the standard A/Ts.

This means that for performance drivers, the CVT is capable of developing infinite ratios and still enjoys fuel efficiency. The Lancer's MX 6-speed sportronic A/T, for instance, is equipped with six fixed pulley diameters and a manual shift gate that enables manual operation and selection of the gear of choice.

Mitsubishi Philippines' Corp. president and CEO Teruhiko Shibata told the crowd in last week's media launch that the CVT is equipped with an all-new 1600 cc 4G18 Cyclone engine for fuel economy and responsiveness at low and high revs.



PLUSHY interior

The technology enables the new Lancer to have no loss in transfer of engine output to the drive train, as direct transfers take place via steel belt and pulleys instead of gears of varying sizes.

Test run

During a continuous 60-kph test run in Thailand (where these Lancers are now being assembled and imported to the Philippines) the test drivers ran 20.6 km per liter, said Mitsubishi Philippines senior manager for marketing Froy Dytianquin.

A perfect turning radius, an elegant and a soundproof interior are just some of the comments of Lancer 2003 spectators who got a chance to test-drive the new car

Variants MX 6-speed sportronic, the GLS automatic, the GLS manual, and the GLX (manual transmission) were introduced as Mitsubishi Philippines crossed its fingers hoping Lancer fans would not be disappointed in terms of specifications and expectation level.

"The Lancer's 6-speed Sportronic, for instance, aims to make the car more enjoyable by having the driver dictate his or her own preference for shifting. Like the previous Invecs II sports mode, in Invecs III 6-speed sportronic, one can dictate one's own pace," said Dytianquin. The new transmission uses an adaptive shift control to deliver a safe and stable ride, he added.

Survey results

A perfect turning radius, an elegant and a soundproof interior are just some of the comments of Lancer 2003 spectators and enthusiasts in Rockwell last Friday who got a chance to test-drive the new car.

The survey included comments like "the interior is very European with beige colors and leather seats," and "the cabin is very quiet."

The intended tight parking space required skillful maneuvers, and the Lancer won approval of most of the test drivers in Rockwell who gave a thumbs-up on the turning radius (4.9 meters).

MX is equipped with a 6-disc CD-VCD changer and a 6.5-inch LCD display.

Mitsubishi officials say it studied thoroughly what the market wanted.

First impressions

Club Mitsubishi president Rufi Parpan said that the new Lancer may look smaller on the outside but actually has a bigger passenger compartment. Big cabin space.

"It's very quiet inside. A lot of people are saying that's it's quiet inside," he said.

The Lancer's plushy interiors, he added, could give other luxury cars a run for their money considering the reasonable price of the Lancer.

"The Lancer notably has plushier interior compared to other car models of the same segment. Even the lower-end GLS is plush inside," he said.

"In considering the price I should say it's really worth it," he added. Parpan, however added, that sportier cars should have less chrome.

He said that he wonders why the new Lancer model was given a luxury look. "They should not have chromed it. We liked black better, we hate the chrome. When it's a sportier model, absence of chrome is the key," he said.

The Lancer which has the diamond-cut nose design, honeycombed design grille, color keyed front bumper, chrome grip type door handles, ˙clear-lens reflector type halogen lamps, chrome body side and bumper moldings, chrome scuff plates and 15-inch aluminum wheels complete the new Lancer look.

For Dytianquin, the Lancer's styling is unique.

"The grille is different. The taillight is also different. You will not see this from other Lancer distributors abroad. This has been a combination of our efforts to introduce active and exciting styling," he said.

The interior features a wide cabin for more spacious legroom. The rear occupants enjoy more legroom due to higher hip points, longer wheelbase, and a front seat design that allows the feet to be extended beneath the seat.

The top-end MX is also equipped with a 6-disc CD-VCD changer and a 6.5-inch LCD display.

Favorable financing

"Based on last year's experience, the banks favor (more loans) from the high-end market. But the low-end GLX is also a contender, considering its positioning as a fleet model. There's a chance for the GLX to pick up volume," said Dytianquin.

Will the Lancer finally dominate the passenger car market, both in pricing and specs?

"We're looking not on the passenger car market as a whole, because I don't think we can do that on the Lancer alone. Our competitors have small cars so we are really targeting the 1600 segment. All our Lancer variants are 1600. I think we can at least capture the second spot in the 1600," he said.

Is an all-imported-from-Thailand Lancer more expensive now than when it was assembled in the Philippines? Mitsubishi claims it's not.

"We were able to price it competitively by going CBU (completely built-up). It is to the customers' advantage to the point that we can react to the demand easily because the CBU can just be ordered in Thailand," said Dytianquin.

The Lancer GLX MT goes for P695,000; the GLS MT, P755,000; the GLS AT, P795,000; and MX AT, P840,000.

INVECS III 6-speed sportronic has CVT for automatic transmission.

City smart, nature tough.
The Suzuki Jimny
The Cute 4X4

Finally, fun driving all you want with your newest friend, the all-new Jimny from Suzuki.

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SUZUKI

Honda launches new 4-stroke motorcycle

Text and photos by Charles E. Buban

WHILE the country still decides on which motorcycle engine type should rightfully ply its streets and highways, one company made sure it introduces a new model that is on the safe side.

Honda Philippines comes out with its latest four-stroke model suited for tricycle use.

"TMX 125 is an intelligent choice for a motorcycle one would use for work. Now that emission is a big issue nowadays, it's good to know that this latest model passed the Euro-1 standard, which means it more than meets the standards set by the country's Clean Air Act," announced Yasuhiro Kikuta, Honda Philippines president and GM during the product launch early last week in Lahug, Cebu.

Under the Euro-1 standards, four-stroke engines like the TMX 125 will be allowed to emit up to 13 g/km of carbon monoxide, 3 g/km of hydrocarbon and 0.3 g/km of nitrogen oxide.

Spunky sibling

This spunky sibling of Honda's popular TMX 155 features a 125 cc engine that delivers a maximum output of 7.9 kW/8,500 rpm and 9.46 Nm/7,500 rpm of torque.

Its 9-L capacity fuel tank (plus 2 L more on reserve) gives the TMX 125 enough supply to reach more kilometers between fill-ups.

Said Kikuta: "Motorcycle buyers would find the TMX 125 a real bargain at P63,900 considering its improved features. Definitely, we want this model in the hands of more people."

THE NEW Honda TMX 125 is a perfect workhorse.

Responsible riding

Also during the TMX 125 launch, Honda introduced a new program to take the lead in promoting wisdom among motorcycle drivers.

"We want to erase such notion that motorcycle riders once out on the street are always in danger or they themselves are dangerous," said Ager Kiocho, Honda Philippines AVP for sales and marketing.

Called the Honda Smart (Safety, Measures, Advice and Riding Tips) Start, it aims to instruct and inform Honda motorcycle riders about the fundamentals of safe, responsible riding.

Smart Start begins with the advice on riding qualifications, proper riding gear, pre-ride safety checks, habits on the road and for riding with a passenger.

This program gives both seasoned and prospective riders a short course on intelligent motoring. "Every facet of responsible motorcycling is touched on and by simply remembering and following the advice laid out by the Smart Start guidelines, riders will be able to practice it almost instinctively," assured Kiocho.

The package shall be made available to all Honda motorcycle buyers at every Honda dealer nationwide.

HONDA TMX 125 is powered by a 4-stroke, OHC, air-cooled 125cc engine capable of discharging 9.46 Nm/7,500 rpm of horsepower.

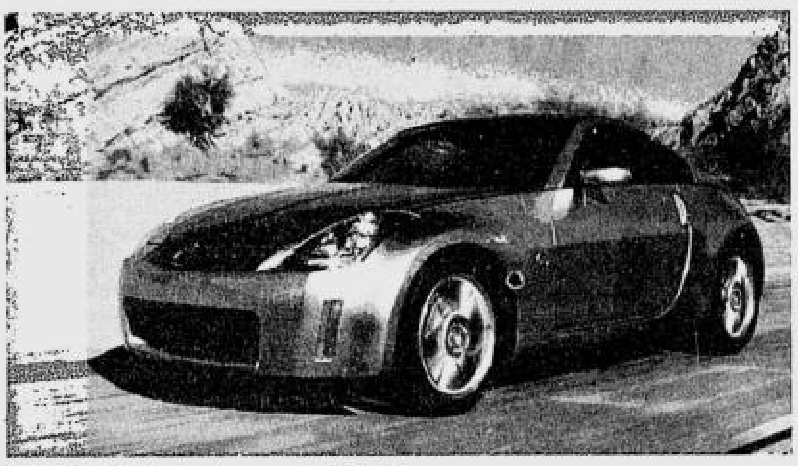
Sales target

With the entry of more players, particularly Chinese manufacturers, Honda has announced it is targeting to sell 150,000 units in 2003.

"Right now, we are faced with a greater challenge as industry players increase. But we can always lead through newer model lineups, service and parts operations, and in enhancing total customer satisfaction.

The country's leading motorcycle company has successfully sold over 85,000 units last year concentrating more on solo ride models such as the XR110, Wave 125 and Wave Alpha.

"This is a very high goal. However, if we strengthen our dealership network; continue launching strategic models; improve ordering and delivery system; offer an attractive pricing scheme particularly on low down payment; strengthen after-sales support in terms of parts and service; and promote safety riding, I don't see why we can't achieve this goal," he concluded.


NISSAN 350Z is also known as the Fairlady.

New sports car embodies Nissan's bold concept

NISSAN'S bold, new thinking has found form in the all-new Nissan 350Z. Known to its enthusiasts as the Fairlady, the 350Z symbolizes Nissan's revived spirit and passion.

A showcase of the company's daring approach to design, performance and technology, this sports coupé challenges European sports cars with its breathtaking acceleration, surefooted braking and snappy handling.

So good was the enthusiasts' acceptance of the 350Z that when it was introduced in Japan in 2001 orders backed up production by at least four months.

In the United States, the "Z" was awaited with much anticipation. It was launched at the North American Auto Show in Detroit as a 2003 model. Instantly, the stylish 287 horsepower (206 kW or 280 PS) car hauled in a beeline of buyers who eagerly anticipated the return of the Z-car for over five years.

Z heritage

The 350Z continues the Z heritage of design, performance and value that has remained unchallenged since former Nissan US president Yutaka Katayama brought the original Datsun 240Z to life in 1970. Katayama is known as the "Father of the Z."

Designed to wow at first sight, the 350Z is an object of unending adoration. The sleek, slippery exterior combines gracefully with the low aspect ratio tires and large diameter wheels. Inheriting the "Z-ness" of sporty elegance and unmatched performance of previous Zs, the Fairlady boasts of many new features perfected to an exceptionally high quality.

Nissan describes the Z car's ride as a "sporty flat ride." Alluding to its distinct handling giving the driver total command of the vehicle as it responds quickly in every driving situation.

Weight distribution

The precise control of the 350Z emanates from its front midship engine layout with a front-to-rear weight bias ratio of 53:47. This weight distribution puts the center of gravity right in the middle and is much better than the Porsche Boxster, BMW M Coupé and the Honda S2000.

Well-loved design cues passed on from the first-generation Z include the short-deck styling, long wheelbase and triangular cabin form. The classic arch-shaped roof flows down to the rear hatch giving a 0.29 coefficient of drag (Cd) with the optional aerodynamic parts installed. To this distinct styling, Nissan designers added the bold geometrical forms in the head lamps, taillights and recessed door handles.

Fire-breathing engine

Under the hood, a fire-breathing 3.5-liter VQ35DE engine produces 274 lb-ft of torque (363 Nm or 37 kg-m) at 4,800 rpm. Expanding the VQ power range to fit the demands of hard driving and city transporting meant reworking the intake port design, and adopting a modified Variable Timing Control (VTC) system, the same one found on the Nissan Cefiro, Nissan Sentra Exalta and Nissan Serena.

VTC technology enables the Cefiro-derived engine to deliver not only outstanding start-off acceleration but also high speed passing performance because of its flat torque characteristics.

An added benefit is a sonorous exhaust note that thrills the auditory senses. Adopting an electronically controlled throttle has enhanced drivability. While extra short shifts in the 6-speed manual makes more quicker gear transitions. The automatic version sports a 5-speed gearbox with a manual gear changing mode similar to a sequential shifter.

Capable of reaching 100 kph in about 6 seconds, the Z's rigid chassis rides on special aluminum suspension components and patented "ripple" dampers. The shock absorbers are capable of responding rapidly to changes in the tire contact keeping the ride flat and sustaining traction at all times. The use of a highly rigid cylinder block also acts as a stressed member giving that extra rigid structure required in harnessing such horsepower.

Interior come-ons

Inside the 350Z are a 2-seater streamlined cabin, column-mounted instrumentation cluster that moves with the steering wheel adjustment and a strut tower bar that sports the now envied Z-emblem. Special models come equipped with tire-melting Brembo brakes and Vehicle Dynamics Control (VDC) which will enable the vehicle to gain sportier handling characteristics.

The 350Z has yet to set its wheels in the Philippines but plans are already in place for that to happen.

Honda's pitch on the new excise tax; Mel's bold Lancer

FULL TANK

Al S. Mendoza

I THINK Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. should reevaluate his statement virtually accusing Honda Cars Philippines of causing the government to lose P1.5 billion in revenues last year. That was a serious charge against a giant car company that has a long history of fruitful partnership with the government since its entry into the local motoring industry in 1991.

Magsaysay made the accusation during a public hearing on the Excise Tax Law, using the forum to also question the Department of Finance for allowing the Honda CR-V to be exempted from the excise tax payment.

In a press statement to practically refute Magsaysay's tirade, Honda Cars Philippines president Mitsunari Takano said: "Under the current system, close to 100 percent of all excise tax collections came from passenger cars. Honda being the leading passenger car make from 1996 to 2001 is the single biggest excise tax contributor in the automobile industry. Since Honda opened its factory in 1992, it has remitted P9.8 billion in tax payment by the end of 2002. Also, Honda's total tax payments reached P1.449 billion in 2002 from P1.437 billion in 2001."

* * *

The Honda CR-V, which became the center of controversy when it was transformed into a 10-seater to qualify as an AUV from SUV, registered a dramatic increase in sales in 2002. Due to that stroke of commercial genius, the CR-V's price was drastically slashed as it became exempt from the excise tax usually charged SUV models. Customers practically rushed to grab one for the price of an AUV that has virtually the amenities of an SUV.

"Honda would not have sold as much if excise tax were slapped the new model," said Takano. "In fact, there is no way that it would even reach a third of what it sold in 2002 as customers would simply purchase tax-exempt AUVs and (go for) SUVs instead. Honda qualifies that the reported P1.5 billion revenue loss is erroneous and misleading."

Honda said the tax exemption granted Honda was a result of a number of short- and long-term benefits to the "Philippine government" and the country.

* * *

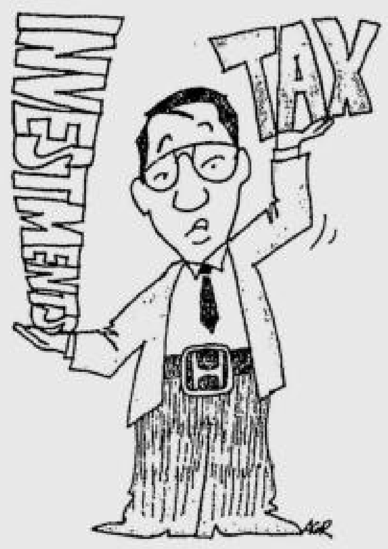


ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

"The production of over 7,000 new CR-Vs is equivalent to P1.1 billion worth of locally manufactured parts produced in 2002, compared to a meager P128.6 million in 2002," said Takano. "Thousands of employees of Honda and its local parts suppliers are now dependent on the success of the CR-V in the Philippines."

For the record, the CR-V is an AICO-registered 10-seater vehicle under the Tariff Heading 8702.9010 by virtue of EO 93 and 94 of April 9, 2002, EO 129 of Sept. 23, 2002, as endorsed by the Cabinet-level Inter-Agency TRM (Tariff Related Matters) Committee and duly signed by President Macapagal-Arroyo. As such, various assembly parts and components of the 10-seater CR-V are exchanged among Asean countries like Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Honda said it infused some P70 million on tools and equipment, which are necessary for the development of local parts as well as the redirection of its production system at its Sta. Rosa factory. It further invested P1 billion for its transmission plant in Laguna that will yield some 140,000 transmission units to be exported to Asia, North America and Europe. This will generate an annual revenue of $65 million. The new plant will start full production and export by mid-2003.

* * *

As Honda's gesture to fully support the government's frenetic moves to resuscitate a sagging economy, Takano wrote Sen. Ralph Recto urging the Batangas lawmaker to seriously study the new tax law that is expected to be passed by the Senate before the regular break in March.

In his letter to Recto, chair of the Senate ways and means committee, Takano said he "expressly supports the shift from the current lopsided tax structure toward a value-based excise tax system."

I guess that before our legislators would finally pass the new excise tax law, they should pause first and reflect on this Honda forecast: "The Philippine business climate has become unpredictable and may send the wrong signals for investors to consider (shifting their) undertakings elsewhere. The industry needs the Philippine government's strong support and protection for it to be globally competitive and to hurdle the continuing economic quandary."

* * *

In a move I would call "the grandest, if not boldest, of them all," Mitsubishi has rolled out its new Lancer model imported from Thailand. This comes on the heels of Mitsubishi's stunning decision to terminate assembling the local Lancer model for 2003.

The reason for the "Lancer stunner" could be deduced from the recent "angry" reaction of Mel Dizon, the senior vice president of Mitsubishi Motors Corp., who has rued the government's lack of incentives for local assemblers of vehicles even as he exhorted the government to create an atmosphere of "hospitable environment" for domestic vehicle manufacturing.

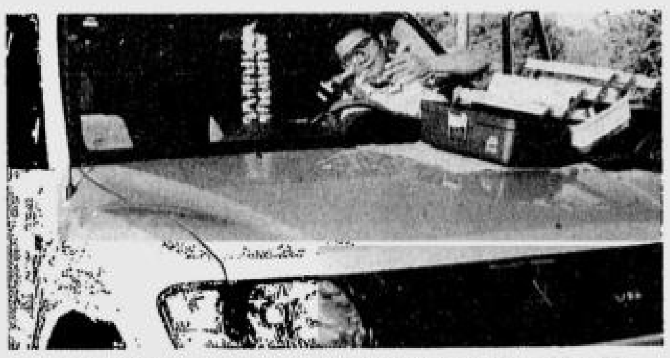
One of the few guys in the industry who could really come up with sound and credible analyses of the goings-on in the automotive world is Mel Dizon, the man whom Ray Butch Gamboa said is destined to "become Mitsubishi president one day."

Here's wishing you all the luck, Mel, for the new venture on your best-selling Lancer.

* * *

QUOTE ME. When overtaking in the highway, blow your horn twice whenever necessary.

Windshield crack repair now offered in Taytay


DAMAGE visibility of cracked windshield will reduce from 85 to 90 percent, restore strength 100 percent and prevent crack from further cracking or spreading.

MANILA-MIDWEST Windshield Repair Co., a licensee of US-patented technology for long crack repair method, opens its new branch on National Road, Barangay San Juan, Taytay, Rizal (in front of G-Liner Terminal).

The company offers complete repair service from maintenance, cleaning of dirty or hazy windshield, removal of water marks and fine scratches, car air-con cleaning without disassembly (in 45 minutes), defogger/defroster repair and repair of cracked windshield up to 24 inches long guaranteed.

Mel Monzon, general manager of Manila Midwest Windshield Co., said car owners can restore their crack windshield cheaper than replacement and save time. Not only that, it preserves the factory seal of the windshield, thus preventing probable cause of water leaks and air noise.

You may visit the firm at VS-I Building, 40 Kalayaan Ave., Quezon City, or call 435-6391 or 926-6829.

E-mail: pr_business@inquirer.com.ph

BUSINESS

10 banks eye $540-M euro bond deal

By Clarissa S. Batino

TEN foreign investment banks are vying to underwrite the Philippines' 500 million euro-denominated bonds (equivalent to about $540 million) scheduled to be sold late this month or early March.

The Department of Finance has yet to name the bank or the syndicate that would handle the bond float but sources said that JP Morgan, Deutsche Bank and Credit Suisse First Boston were leading the pack in terms of price.

Proceeds of the bond sale would help complete the government's $2.4-billion financing requirement this year to help cover an estimated deficit of P202 billion.

So far, the government has raised $1.2 billion from the sale of two sets of $500 million worth of 10-year global bonds and $200 million worth of zero coupon bonds.

A senior finance official said the government would likely name three banks to underwrite and manage the 7-year borrowing. The DOF has yet to secure the approval of the policy-making Monetary Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

Others in the list are ABN-Amro, Barclay's, ING Barings, HSBC, Morgan Stanley, Salomon Smith Barney, and UBS Warburg.

A source noted that JP Morgan and Deutsche offered the government the cheapest underwriting fees. But other factors like market reach and relationships would come into play alongside details like insurance.

The sale of the bonds denominated in euros was accelerated after the government was discouraged from tapping the Japanese bond market for cash.

Without a guarantee, the government may only access the five-year Japanese bond market unlike the state-owned National Power Corp., which was able to issue 18-year yen bonds with the backing of the Asian Development Bank.

The national government also raised some $500 million worth of 10-year funds from the sale of yen bonds in late 2001 when the borrowing was guaranteed by the Nippon Export and Investment, a state-owned institution.

Still, the government is hopeful that it could tap the Japanese market for additional funds to complete its offshore fund-raising program within the first half.

This year, the government must raise a net amount of P198.55 billion to finance the deficit.

Of the net borrowing program in 2003, P103.27 billion would be tapped from the onshore market from an original target of P40.518 billion while the foreign borrowings were slightly reduced to P95.28 billion from P96.12 billion.

The government has also been pushing the bureaus of internal revenue and of customs to undertake measures designed to boost collections.

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LIFESTYLE
Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

Two by two

Remember 'Woman on Top? You, too, can cook up a tempest and a romance with your beloved

TOO much trouble to reserve for two in a restaurant? Too expensive?

Set the mood for a romantic night by asking your significant other to help you practice your culinary skills instead. You'll be surprised at how romantic—and flavorsome—your night may turn out as you start preparing a home-cooked meal for two. Just think "Woman on Top."

Below are recipes from the San Miguel Purefoods Culinary Center for Chicken, Corn and Pesto Soup, Warm Salad with Pure Foods Bacon, Monterey Steak with Herbed Buffer and Garlic Roasted Potatoes and Bananas Foster.

Of course, the night won't be complete until you complement the sweet romantic Valentine atmosphere with kisses.

For more recipes and help in the kitchen, visit www.mygreatfood.com or send a self-addressed stamped envelope to San Miguel Pure Foods Culinary Center, Legaspi corner Eagle Streets, Barrio Ugong Pasig City.

Chicken, Corn and Pesto Soup

1 pack cream of chicken powder soup
1 cup (200g) Magnolia chicken breast fillet, cubed
1/3 cup cream style corn
1/4 tsp pepper
1 tbsp pesto

Cook soup according to package directions. While boiling, drop chicken cubes and cream style corn. Let boil for five minutes or until chicken is tender. Season with pepper. Drop 1 tsp of pesto in each bowl before serving.

Makes two servings.

Warm Salad Greens with Purefoods Bacon

100gm spinach or choice of lettuce greens, cut into serving pieces
1/2 cup Purefoods honeycured bacon chopped
1/2 cup prepared herded croutons
Dressing:
1/4 cup olive oil
1 tsp red wine vinegar
1/2 tsp prepared mustard
1 tbsp chopped basil
1 tsp chopped parsley
salt to taste
ground black pepper to taste

Pan-fry bacon until crisp. Drain and set aside. Combine dressing ingredients in a saucepan. Let boil and turn off heat. Add salad greens and toss to coat evenly with dressing. Transfer to plates and garnish with bacon and croutons.

Makes two servings.

Monterey Steaks with Herbed Butter and Roasted Garlic Mashed Potatoes

2 pc Monterey rib eye steaks, 3/4 inch thick (about 200gm ea.)
salt
freshly ground black pepper
2 tsp Worcestershire sauce
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
Herbed Butter:
1/4 cup Magnolia Gold butter, softened
1 tbsp chopped parsley
2 tbsp chopped basil
1 tsp coarsely ground black pepper
Roasted Garlic Mashed Potatoes:
1 head (8cloves) Taiwan garlic
olive oil for brushing
1 cup prepared mashed potatoes
salt and pepper to taste
Sidings:
Buttered vegeta-

TWO/ C2

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2. Rice Toppings-15 Recipes on Feb. 24(PM) & 25(AM & PM)
Special One-Meeting Lessons
Feb. 8 (AM) Misua Guisado, Maki Seafood lomi
10 (PM) Seafood fried rice, Fried Chicken pieces, Curry crabs, Pork cutlet
11 (AM) Chicken feet Spicy spare ribs, almond gelatin
(PM) Wu shi spare ribs, Orange Chicken Wings, Eggplant with chili minced pork, Stuffed bamboo pila
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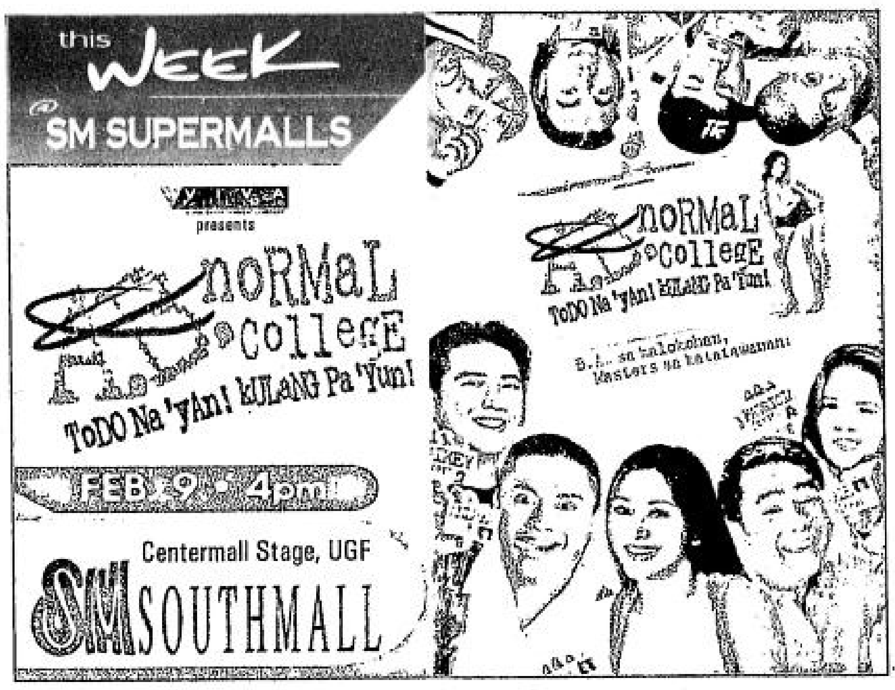
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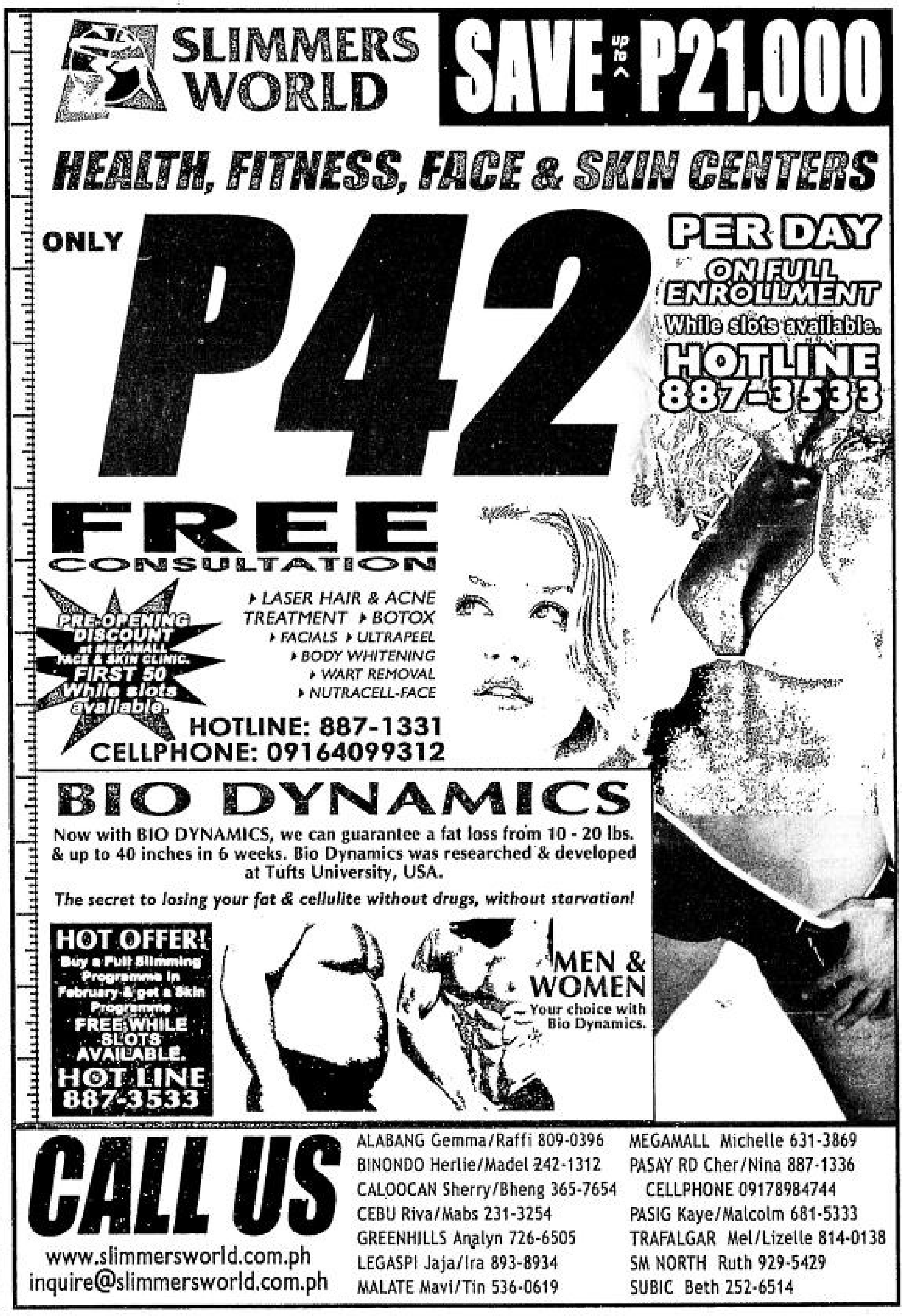
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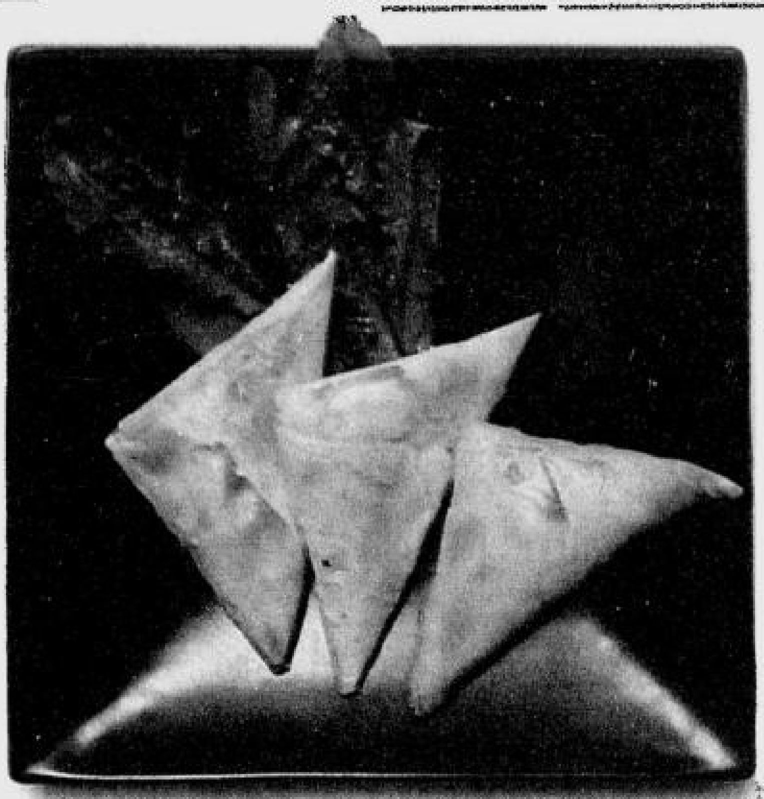


SPANAKOPITA

Frequent flyers can revisit their favorite dishes from around the globe through the kitchen of Store Super

MESCLUN with Grilled Vegetables

The world in a super bowl

THE WORLD, indeed, is getting smaller and at the new "global cafe" called Store Super, taking on the different flavors of the world is a possibility in just one sitting.

Carlo Tanseco and Reena Francisco—cousins, foodies and now business partners—have put together the best dishes from different parts of the globe in one very spare menu.

Stopovers

Located at the ground floor of the bustling Greenbelt 3, Store Super opened last holiday season and easily attracted a following, especially among frequent travelers who desired to re-experience the Green Chicken Curry that they thoroughly enjoyed in Thailand, or the Grilled Hanoi Pork Chops of Vietnam.

The food trip at Store Super hops from a basic yet totally enjoyable Fish and Chips recipe from England to the mildly spicy Royal Butter Chicken from India to a most flavorful Filetto Al Burro from Italy, including so many other culinary stopovers in between.

The cousins put to full and ingenious use their design and business management know-how for Store Super, and flavored it with their more personal pursuits—travel and food—to add a fresh twist to this new venture.

Family talent

Tanseco is a houseware designer and design consultant for various export firms here and abroad, and is famous for his minimalist home accessories stores Atmosfera and its predecessor, Store Co. Inc.

Francisco, on the other hand, is one of the brains behind the highly successful coffee shop chain Figaro. When it comes to details, from operations to the menu, she plays a big role.

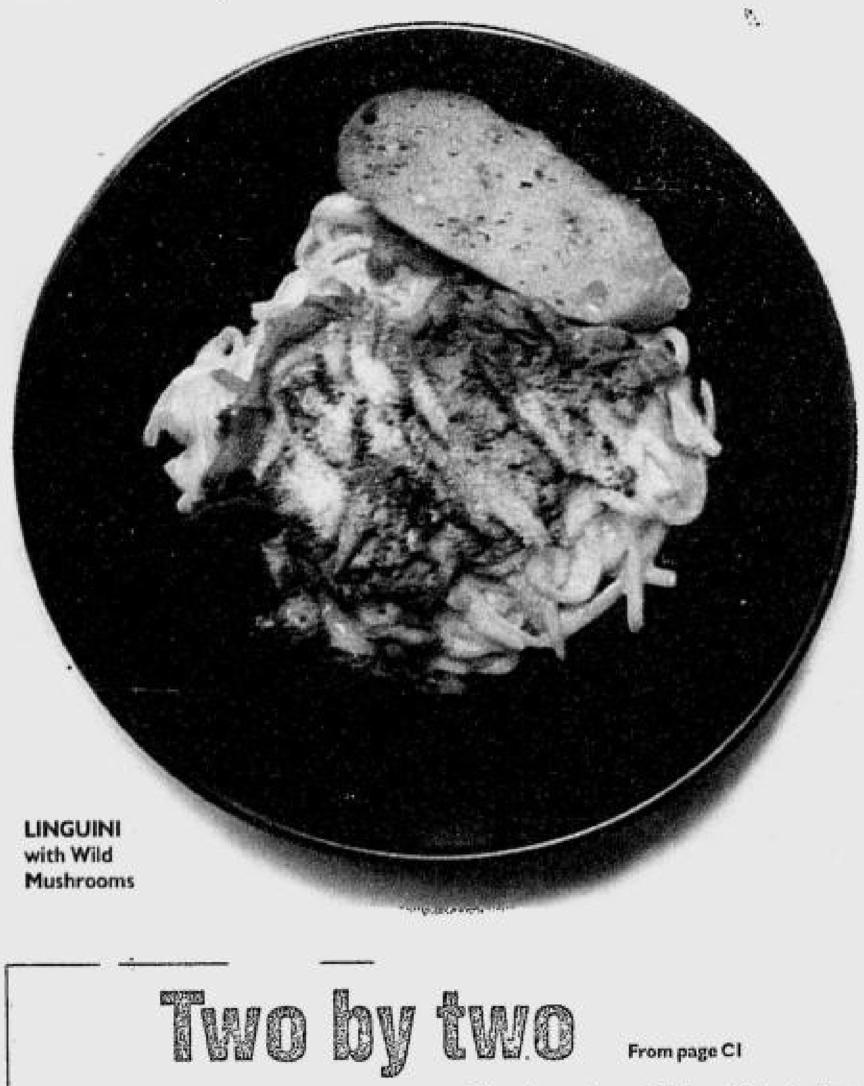
She has a knack for breaking down the flavors of a meal so that she is able to note down the recipe without having to ask the cook. It's a family talent. Carlo convinced Reena to collaborate with him on Store Super. They collected all their favorite recipes gathered from their business trips around the world and put together one spare menu that is just bursting with flavor, from appetizers (Chang Mai Chicken Wings; Spanakopita, Greece's spinach with fete cheese wrapped in phyllo triangles), soup (Mulligatawny, curried chicken and vegetables from India) and noodles (authentic Phad Thai) to the entree (the Grilled Hanoi Pork Chops is mouthwatering).

Also noteworthy are the Heaven Beef with Sticky Rice from Thailand and the Grilled Salmon Teriyaki and the Mesclun with Grilled Vegetables tossed with balsamic vinaigrette.

A meal at Store Super is never complete without the desserts which are especially prepared with a "just baked" taste by Tanseco and Francisco's good friend Millet Soberano.

The Store Super dining experience is also enhanced by its warm and elegant interiors. A rich Asian feel fills the atmosphere, with the colors inspired by food and spices: curry yellows, saffron orange, paprika red. Warm, rich and modern, the centerpiece of its design are the translucent walls stenciled with beautiful Oriental images.

GRILLED Salmon Teriyaki



LINGUINI with Wild Mushrooms

CHANG Mai Chicken Wings

STORE Super owners Reena Francisco and Carlo de Santos Tanseco

ASIAN touches in interiors of Store Super

Two by two

From page C1

bles

Cook steaks in a pre-heated grill pan according to your desired doneness. Cooking time: For rare: cook 2 minutes/side, medium: 3 minutes/side, well done: 4 minutes/side.

Herbed Butter: Mix all ingredients in a bowl. Form into a log and chill until ready to use.

Roasted Garlic Mashed Potatoes: Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Slice the entire garlic head into half and brush with olive oil. Roast for 15 to 20 minutes or until garlic softens and color turns light brown. Peel and chop garlic and mix with the rest of the ingredients.

Makes two servings.

Bananas Foster

2 tbsp Magnolia gold butter bananas (saba/lakatan), sliced
2 pc brown sugar
1/4 cup rum or any orange liquor
1 tbsp pinch of cinnamon
pinch of nutmeg
Toppings:
prepared whipped cream
chopped nuts
prepared caramel sauce
mint leaves

Melt butter in a pan. Add the bananas. Put all the remaining ingredients and mix well. Cook for 4 minutes over moderate heat. Transfer bananas on individual serving containers. Garnish bananas with whipped cream, chopped nuts, caramel sauce and mint leaves.

STEAK with Herbed Butter and Roasted Garlic Mashed Potatoes

Car towing gripes and other consumer woes

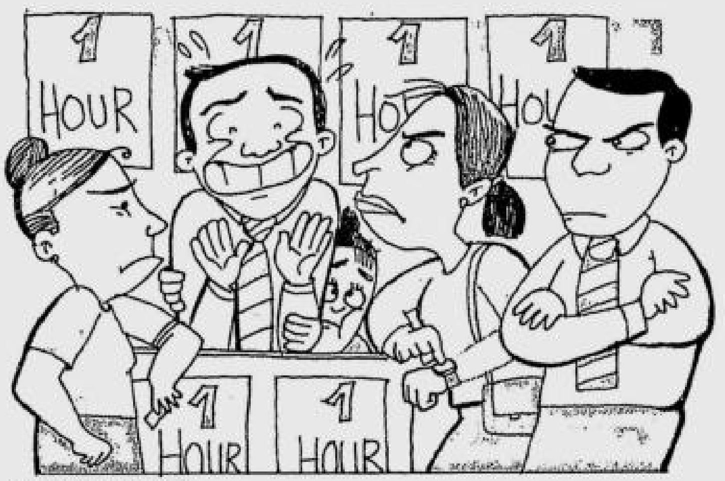


ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

PDI reader Norman Villamayor (normanv@unocal.com) drove to a restaurant and bar in Libis, Quezon City, to join the party sponsored by his company. While he was waiting for a vacant spot in the crowded parking area, a man in barong Tagalog signaled him to double park in front of the establishment. He did as he was told: parked the car, got out, and gave the key to the valet after getting the parking ticket.

THE CONSUMER

Marietta Velasco Giron

Villamayor's trouble began one hour later when he found out that his car had been towed! What was worse, the restaurant owners blamed him and argued that the valet wasn't theirs. To his advantage, Villamayor was able to show the valet parking receipt and proved the owners wrong but that didn't settle their argument. To cut the story short, the restaurant owners eventually redeemed the car from the towers.

"Reminiscing over what happened, all I expected from the restaurant management despite their being rude to me was an apology over what happened and the acceptance that it was their fault. It's a shame that such a nice place is being run by people who do not know much about good customer relations," Villamayor wrote to us.

Here's another towing incident related by car owner Joey Corota. He wrote: "I parked my vehicle with the motor running in front of a driveway of a hardware store in Better Living, Parañaque. I then ran to the shop to buy something. While paying for the item, I heard somebody shout that my car was going to be towed away. I caught the towers in time while they chained my car to their equipment.

"A man wearing sunglasses and yellow uniform, presumably the towing officer, approached me and said I could opt to pay P500 on the spot; otherwise the car would be towed and I'd have to pay city hall a fine that was three times more. I paid the man P500."

Buffet craze

Ddguzman@ucpb.com wrote: "I have gone the rounds of buffets in town and highly recommend Kamayan, Saisaki, Dads, Chinatown, Tomyang. These are eaters' paradise. Food choices are varied, food is always warm, service is excellent, and the places are clean. What's more, the buffet tables are kept fully stocked."

De Guzman also praised Cabalen branches in West Avenue and Robinsons Place Ermita. However, he has one complaint about the new branch in Harrison Square. "A few weeks ago, half of the dishes on the buffet table were missing and it was only around 7 p.m. These were never replenished," he griped.

Photo shop complaints

Maica Bailon (maicatok@hotmail.com) is one of the numerous readers who have complained about one-hour photo developing centers. "I dropped off my film at Kameraworld in Robinsons Galleria at 12 p.m. expecting to pick up the prints one hour later, as advertised. But it took 25 minutes more before the prints were ready. When I complained to the manager, two more disgruntled customers joined me. The manager explained to us that the machine broke down. All three of us pointed out that this happened quite often. It was unfair to us who had to rush back to our jobs after our lunch break. We also pointed out that they should stop advertising one-hour processing or prints ready in one hour.

"I appreciate the gesture of the manager who delivered the photos to my office. Nevertheless, something has to be done to stop this false advertising."

Comments from readers

Lilian Bartolabac wrote: "In your previous column, you pointed out that cashiers at supermarkets and other business establishments often lacked loose change. Recently, I noticed that SM Supermarket-Southmall had notices posted at checkout counters with the information that for every P5 worth of 25 centavos paid by customers, 25 centavos will be returned to the customer. It's a good *barya*-raising drive, but it is still the customer who is expected to raise the coins for the stores. And it is still the customer who is shortchanged when the cashier runs out of coins and uses candies in lieu of loose change. Will the cashier accept candies as payment, I wonder.

"I also hope these cashiers will stop saying cents instead of centavos. The 25 cents, for example, is roughly equivalent to six pesos. Putting it literally, are they asking for 25 cents? *Kulang na nga ang sukli sobra pa ang singil?*"

From Barry H., a lawyer in Saipan: "I am married to a Filipina. I recently experienced something that is very unusual by American legal standards. My wife's pregnant sister had an emergency C-section surgery at a hospital in Bulacan. After a couple of days, she was ready for discharge, but the family was not able to pay the full amount of the bill. The hospital refused to let her leave until I was finally able to send them money for payment. The hospital practice is considered improper in the US. Is it legal in the Philippines? Can a hospital keep the patient indefinitely?"

E-mail the author at mgiron@i-manila.com.ph

Sizzling recipes for month of love

MAKE your month of love sizzle with the course Barbecue and Grills on Feb. 8, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Tips on the proper use of fresh herbs and spices are also included in the lecture.

On the same day, 1:30-5 p.m., make Cakeshop Specialties like Sans Rival, Caramel Crunch Cake, Black Forest Cake and Mango Cake.

Take Baking I class, ongoing until Feb. 7, 1:30-5 p.m., and learn how to prepare basic pie crust, different types of cakes, quick bread and yeast breads.

Enroll in the Cooking II class, ongoing until Feb. 7, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. The class includes techniques of preparing stocks, soups and sauces, deboning and filleting fish and chicken, basic garnish for plate and platter presentation.

Also check out one-day special courses: Feb. 11-14, Certificate Course Cooking (Basic), 1:30-5 p.m.; Feb. 15, Waitering Basics and Restaurant Operations, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and 9 a.m.-7 p.m.; Feb. 22, Asian Cooking (9 a.m.-1 p.m.) and Lumpia Lumpia (1:30-5 p.m.).

Visit the Maya Kitchen (Tuesday to Saturday) on the 8/F, Liberty Building A. Arnaiz Avenue (Pasay Road), Makati City. Call 892-1185/5011 local 108, or e-mail mayakitchen@pacific.net.ph

Fruits, Flowers, Vegetables, Seafood at the
Weekend Market
Fridays and Saturdays
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Dos Palmas Arreceffi
ISLAND RESORT PALAWAN

CCA offers new entrepreneurship program

YOU'VE got the best brownies in the neighborhood or plan to give paying customers a taste of your time-tested recipes. Whether your hopes lie in catering, starting your own restaurant or marketing your baked or cooked products, a new entrepreneurship program focused on the food industry holds the key.

The Center for Culinary Arts (CCA), Manila has partnered with the Asian Institute of Management Asian Center for Entrepreneurship (AIM-ACE) to undertake just that. How do you get budding chefs and bakers to master both kitchen and management techniques? CCA students will now dip their hands into the entrepreneurial aspect of the matter in the six-month Venture into Entrepreneurship (VIE) Program in the Food Industry. The training includes preparing an enterprise plan complete with market evaluation, entry strategies, financial plan and business registration.

Entrepreneurship has been a long overlooked matter in professional culinary education, observes Susana P. Guerrero, the country's first Certified Culinary Professional of the US-based International Association of Culinary Professionals. Guerrero would know. After building her small Katipunan Avenue bakeshop into the Cravings Group of Companies, she went on to establish CCA. The six-year old school has since produced more than 160 culinary and baking professionals with formal academic degrees—a diploma in Culinary Arts and Technology Management and a certificate in Baking and Pastry Arts. It also boasts of a multitude of awards and distinctions from major culinary events.

The VIE program takes culinary education a step further than just the kitchen or management table, says Dean Alejandrino Ferreria of ACE. "It is designed to help our students evaluate himself and the opportunities available before determining the "best fit" between the entrepreneur and the choice of business venture. We want them to know what they are diving into and the kind of market response to expect from their ideas," he says.

Students will develop entrepreneurial qualities, clearly determine their food service and product concepts and learn to implement every aspect of the business. Activities will range from market testing, finding ideal locations, recipe testing and standardization, finalizing menu and product lines and other activities until the student ends up with a complete plan for a business venture project.

"The VIE Program in the Food Industry will be highlighted by exposure trips to actual business environment and will culminate in a three-day food expo for participants to showcase their ideas," explains Ferreria.

The program will be available for all CCA students beginning this month. Past participants to the CCA Continuing Education Program (CEP), culinary classes for weekend kitchen warriors, can also register. Those unexposed to formal culinary courses who like to try the VIE Program will be required to take a 10-day comprehensive culinary course at CCA.

The VIE Program will be held at the AIM campus in Makati, where C2, the official restaurant of CCA, is also located.

Call CCA at 426-4841 loc. 111.

FLAVORS
Eating light and healthy
FLAVORS Magazine gets you into a healthy start in its Jan-Feb. issue. Perfect for the health-conscious, the issue is packed with delicious and healthful recipes of herb-based dishes, vegetarian fares, herb-infused breads, a cleaning tea and fruit-based desserts.
The issue also comes with features and articles on Spanish cuisine, the wonders of soy protein, a step-by-step guide on how to make salt dough, a cooking lesson, practical household tips, home interior designs, the latest restos in town, plus the newest food products and household items now available in the market.
Call 752-3551 to 53 or e-mail flavorsmagazine@hotmail.com.

Julius Maggi Kitchen
Cooking up a lifestyle.
FEAST FROM THE EAST
Take a mouth-watering tour of Chinese, Thai, and Malaysian cuisine in a FREE culinary session with Chef Kim Ngo of the Center for Culinary Arts, Manila. Then discover the healing power of Oriental medicine from acupuncture specialists. Don't miss this special event on February 11, 13, 15, 18 & 22.
Classes are from 2-5 PM at the Julius Maggi Kitchen, Ground Floor, Nestlé Center, 31 Plaza Drive, Rockwell Center, Makati City. For reservations, please call 726-9232 or 726-1016.
Invite a friend and bring labels of MAGGI Tomato & Meat Cubes, NESTLÉ Lemonade, and MAGGI Sinigang sa Sampalok na may Gabi for a chance to win special prizes in the Nestlé Bring a Friend, Lucky Labels, and Buy & Win promos. Ask for details when you make your reservations.
Specials of the Month featuring Heny Sison:
February 6 - Parade of Tarts and Cheesecakes; February 26 - Art of Sandwich Making
To inquire on fees and make reservations, please call 726-5316.
JOIN THE NESTLÉ CLUB. Fill out the coupon below so we can send you the Nestlé Club form to complete -- our way of getting to know you better. Mail to P.O. Box 1163, Makati Central Post Office or fax to 890-5012.
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Good Food, Good Life

Toast to St. Valentine

DINING OUT

MAMA Rosa Restaurant has a special treat for diners this Valentine's Day, "A Love Affair with Oysters, Strawberries and Chocolates," featuring the eat-all-you-can oyster festival.

For P400, diners can choose from a harvest of oysters served in a variety of ways. To enhance the romantic mood, a string quartet will serenade diners on Feb. 14 at Mama Rosa Eastwood Citywalk in Libis, Q.C. and on Feb. 15 at Mama Rosa on Timog corner Morato avenues, QC. Call 421-2475 to 76 (Eastwood) and 372-6591 (Timog).

ILUSTRADO Restaurant in Intramuros offers the perfect setting for a Valentine dinner. Begin with Amore, a bracing *aperitivo* spiked with Campari, to prime your tastebuds for a hearty, full-course dinner. For the main course, try Slow-Roasted Beef Tenderloin with a Pommery-Mustard-Horseradish Crust and Green Peppercorn Sauce, or New Zealand Lamb Chops with Potato and Mushroom Crêpes with Cabernet-Shiraz Sauce. All served with coffee or tea, a serenade of love songs and a gift box of homemade pralines. Call 527-3674/3675,2345 or 301-0133.

PORTICO. Discover the passion behind Italian-Oriental No Borders Cuisine at Portico 1771 by uncovering its new surprise: a Secret Garden of sensory pleasures and unforgettable ambience.
For this special night only, Portico brings back to its garden a rich choice of flavors from Chateau 1771. Complimentary glasses of wine also await couples with early reservations on Feb. 14. Call 523-2053.

BURGOO American Bar and Restaurant is offering special Valentine dishes such as: Steak and Prawns a la Pobre and Baked Fish and Prawns for the whole month of February. As an added treat, long-stemmed fresh red roses will be given to all female diners on Valentine's Day who order the Valentine Special. Burgoo is located at 310 Tomas Morato Extension, South Triangle Diliman, Quezon City; 2/L, The Podium, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City; and at the 3/L, Powerplant Mall, Rockwell Center, Makati City.

SBARRO is giving away heart-shaped balloons and chocolates for every P250 worth of food purchase on Feb. 14. Sbarro branches are located at SM City North Edsa, SM Megamall Bldg. A, Glorietta 2 in Ayala Center, Robinsons Place Manila, and Festival Mall in Alabang.

THE NEW World Renaissance Hotel's Bocarinos offers a special Chef's Table Menu that includes a choice of entree, soup, appetizer and dessert buffet on Feb. 14. A complimentary glass of champagne will be given to diners; couples will get a box of praline truffles as a memento. The Coffee Shop will offer a special holiday buffet for lunch and dinner which includes carved strip loin, "lechon" and "seafood bar" at P890+ per person. Complimentary glass of champagne will also be given to diners and roses to the ladies. Half-priced drinks are offered at the Lobby Lounge from 8-11 p.m. The women will get a complimentary glass of champagne and the men, an oyster shooter.

At the Emperor Court, a Cantonese dinner buffet will be offered. Praline truffles and roses will be given to the ladies. Call 811-6888.

MANILA Galleria Suites offers dinner buffet packages by the hotel's master chef Farkas. Sample a choice of international cuisine at Raphael Cafe-Restaurant. Guests checking in on Feb. 14 are entitled to a 10-percent discount on any of the dinner buffet packages. Call 633-7111 local 7416/7440.

THE PENINSULA Manila's restaurants have a myriad of offerings to suit every mood on Valentine's Day. Celebrate at The Peninsula Manila's The Lobby, with a dinner buffet.

For an intimate setting that will transport lovers to the more romantic age of the metropolis, Old Manila has a five-course set dinner. There's also Nielsen's dinner buffet from 6:30-10:30 p.m. Savor a four-course set dinner at Mi Piace. The Conservatory has a four-course set dinner.

Regular a la carte menu is available at the Spices from 6-11 p.m.

Call 887-2888 local 2205.

THE SULO Hotel presents "A Celebration of Love," on Feb. 13-15. Partake of the specially prepared set menu for two: dinner with candlelight, complimentary house wine and a box of chocolate pralines. Something Special for Everyone-Love Set Meal and a long stemmed rose will be given to ladies courtesy of the Flower Factory at the Cafe Paraiso and Sushi/Teppanyaki Restaurant. Complimentary wines courtesy of J. Moreau & Fils to all availing promo patrons on V-day. Cake for Two and delectable pralines are offered at the Patisserie this month. Call 924-5051 to 71.

DISCOVERY SUITES' Cafe Berrio lights up the evenings of Feb. 13 and 14 with a buffet dinner set. Couples will have a choice of two special set dinner courses. All female guests will be given special Valentine souvenirs and will be entitled to a raffle of a Hans Brumann jewelry set.Call 635-2222.

THE RICHMONDE Hotel offers a set dinner from Feb. 13-15. Main dish selections include: grilled beef tenderloin with wild mushroom croquette or lapu-lapu and salmon fillet with mint flavored cucumber and saffron rice for Feb.13 and 15; broiled tail of prawn with Oriental spring roll, seared prime cut of lamb with panchetta risotto or prime rib of Angus Beef with baked potato and Yorkshire pudding on Feb. 14. All menus come with salads, soups, desserts and a glass of red or white wine and are priced at P650+ + per person on Feb. 13 and 15 and P800+ + on Feb. 14. Celebrate Valentine's Day with cocktails from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. which includes limitless trips to the cocktail buffet and a choice of glass of red/white wine or alcoholic/non-alcoholic drink. All ladies at the Grill and Exchange Bar will receive a box of pralines as a Valentine treat. Call 638-7777 local 3409.

HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL'S poolside garden offers a Valentine dinner spread buffet-style. Couples can enjoy the poolside dinner buffet and show plus an overnight stay in a deluxe room with a choice of breakfast in bed or buffet breakfast at Cafe Jeepney, rose petals on the bed and a bottle of wine. Prince Albert Rotisserie offers Valentine set dinner menu, Discounted rates for higher room categories are also available.

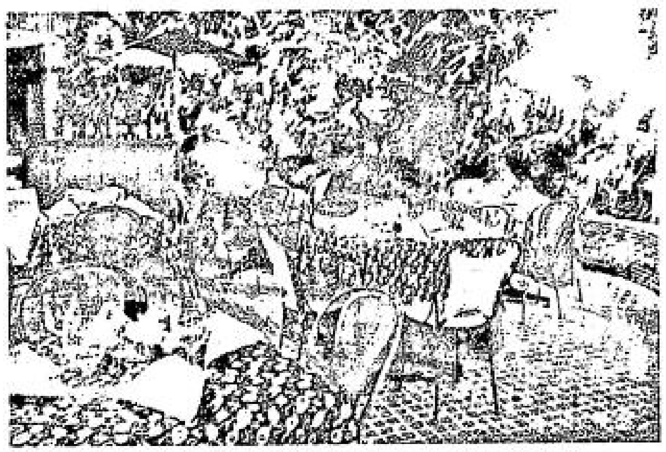
InterContinental's food outlets will offer the following: Cafe Jeepney will serve Valentine lunch and dinner buffets Feb.13 and 14 inclusive of the Valentine Cocktail-of-the-Month. The ladies will be given pralines. Guests partaking of the Feb.14 buffets get 15-percent discount on Jeepney Deli Shop items upon presentation of their receipt on that day. The Valentine menus will still be offered together with regular a la carte dishes on Feb. 15.

THIS VALENTINE season, treat your loved ones to a romantic dinner overlooking the Metropolis at City Garden Hotel Makati's Roofdeck Bar & Grill. Savor rack of lamb, rib eye steak or salmon steak with your choice of soup or salad, garnishing and a glass of wine. Call 899-1111 or its domestic toll free number 1-800-101-Garden (427336).

Happy Valentine

CHOCOLATES for your loved ones from New World Renaissance Hotel

MANILA Galleria Suites offers Valentine treats.



PORTICO'S lush, spectacular garden is a secret paradise in the city—the only one of its kind in the Malate area.

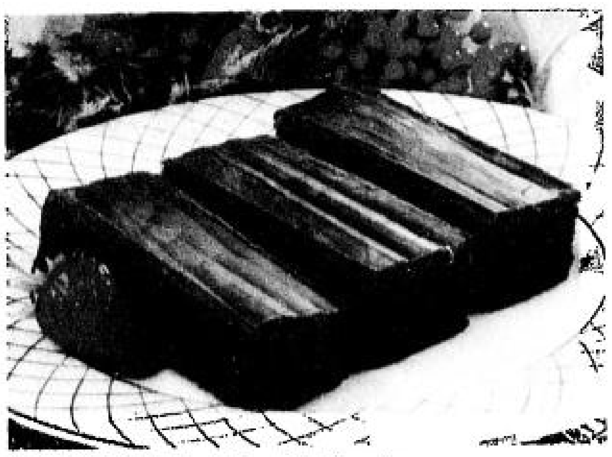
BURGOO'S special set menus

Tasteful breads for Valentine

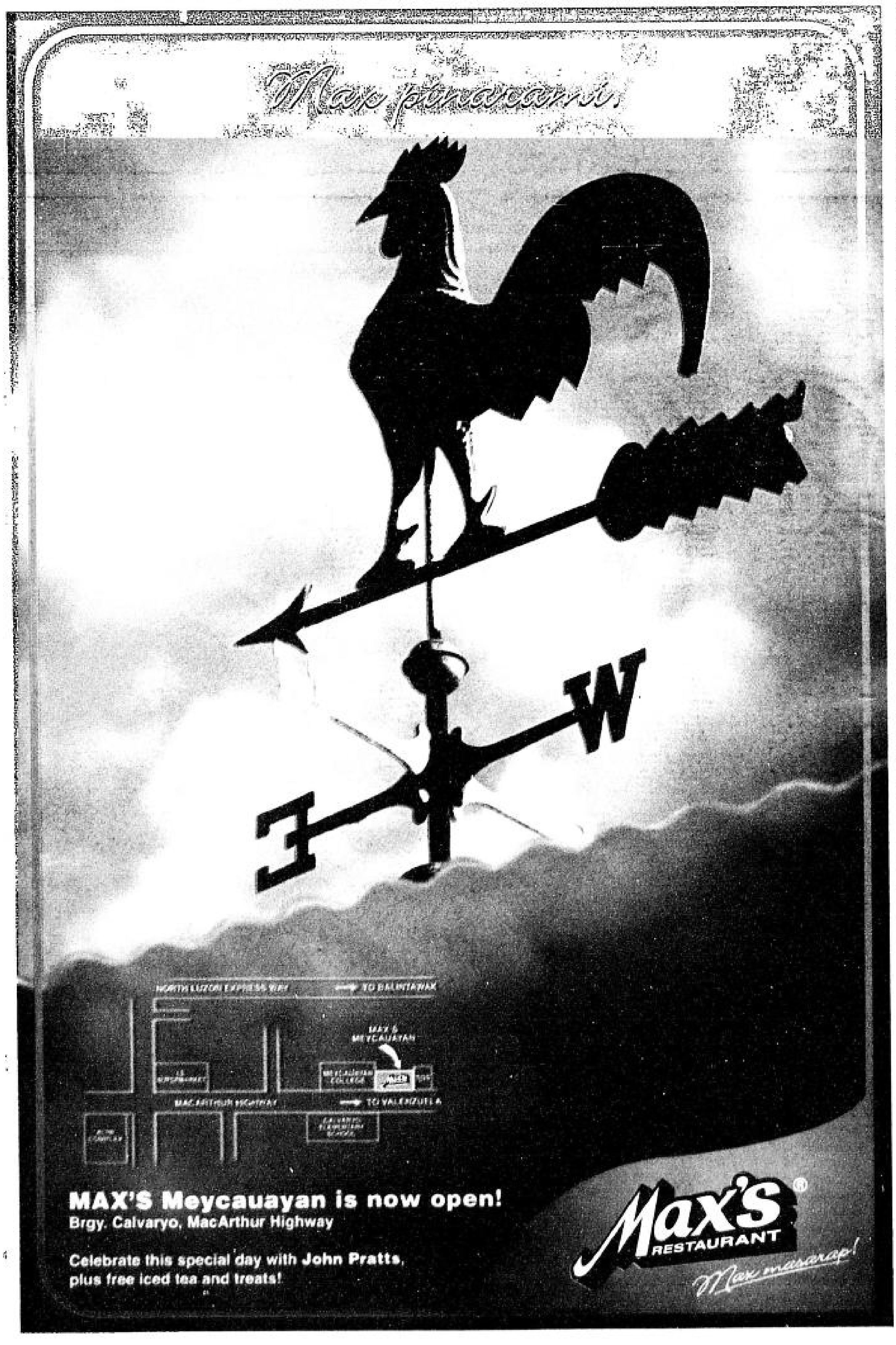
THIS Valentine, The French Baker carries on its tradition of giving quality and tasteful breads with a delightfully new addition: Real Chocolate Brownies. Enjoy them with a healthful St. Dalfour's Organic tea.

At The French Baker, these goodies are served on Arabesque Etoiles tableware which are available at Deco Centrum in Annapolis, Greenhills.

Freshly baked breads are available at The French Baker's 25 stores in Metro Manila, Pampanga and Metro Cebu.



FRENCH Baker's Real Chocolate Brownies



W
E
NORTH LUZON EXPRESS WAY
TO BALINTAWAK
MAX'S MEYCAUAYAN
MEYCAUAYAN COLLEGE
MACARTHUR HIGHWAY
TO VALENZUELA
MAX'S Meycauayan is now open!
Brgy. Calvaryo, MacArthur Highway
Celebrate this special day with John Pratts, plus free iced tea and treats!
Max's RESTAURANT
Max masarap!

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BANCO DE ORO

Come for the spa but stay for the food

Healthy options make up half of dishes on the Nurture Tropical Spa and Café menu; the rest is a gastronomic tour of Tagaytay's nature-fresh offerings

SHRIMP-MANGO
Nurture Salad

Text and photos by
Pennie Azarcon-Dela Cruz

THINK spa and one imagines lean vegetarian meals to go with the soothing ambience, the healing calm and purifying rituals inherent in such places.

But such spartan fare can intimidate ordinary folk who'd rather indulge their palate even as they slough off their body's excesses with a foot scrub or an aromatherapy massage, says Cathy Palma of Nurture Tropical Spa & Café in Barangay Maitim, West II, Tagaytay City.

"We offer healthy vegan dishes but also comfort food, food that makes you feel good because they taste good and remind you of good times," she says of the spa's current bestsellers on the menu that include lamb chops, chicken stuffed with cheese and peaches with *langka* sauce, and a shrimp-mango salad. "We're hoping that people will come not just for the place but also for the food and the fine dining," she adds.

To supplement the spa's long list of healthy eating options, Palma invited chef August Gomez to develop a menu that maximizes the bounty of Tagaytay and reflects its laid-back character.

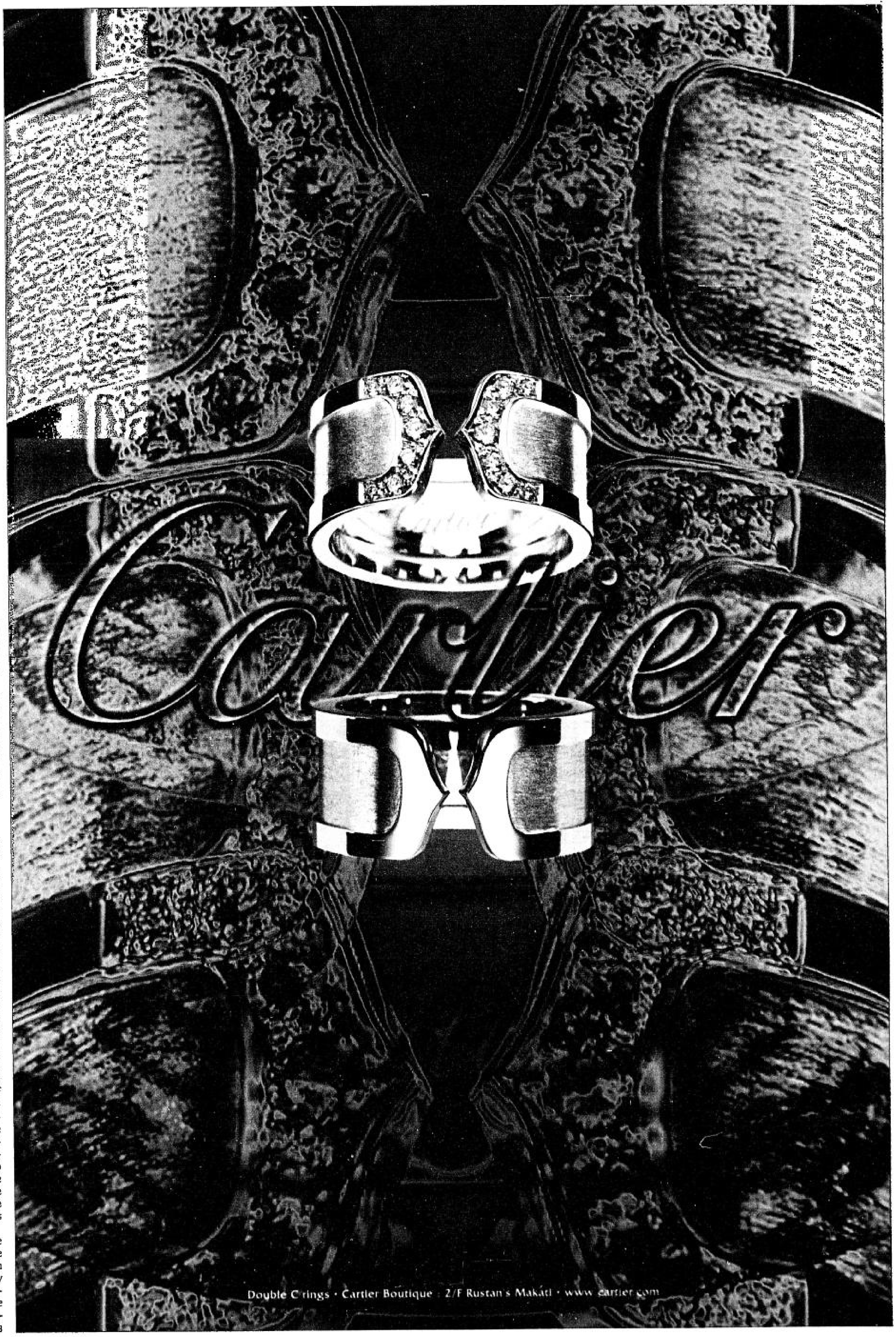
Back to nature

"We wanted dishes that blend with the place," she adds, looking around the spa's airy café whose large open windows let in a cool breeze, the mid-afternoon sunlight and an encompassing view of the surrounding greens. Guests can also dine al fresco amid a picturesque pond lashed with bamboo bridges and trailing vegetation.

The place is ideal for garden weddings, says Palma, pointing to the expanse of lawn ringed by several gazebos and meditation nooks where spa clients usually relax after their massage. There are also several comfortable Ifugao huts where diners can lounge around for a day's stay or overnight.

"We want a native ambience with the amenities of urban living, especially plumbing," says Palma, showing off the cottages' well-de-

COME/ D3

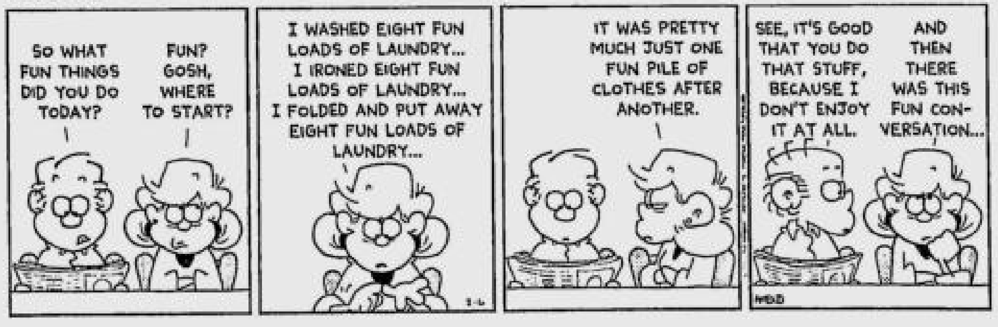


Double C rings · Cartier Boutique : 2/F Rustan's Makati · www.cartier.com

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
ComicRelief
e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph

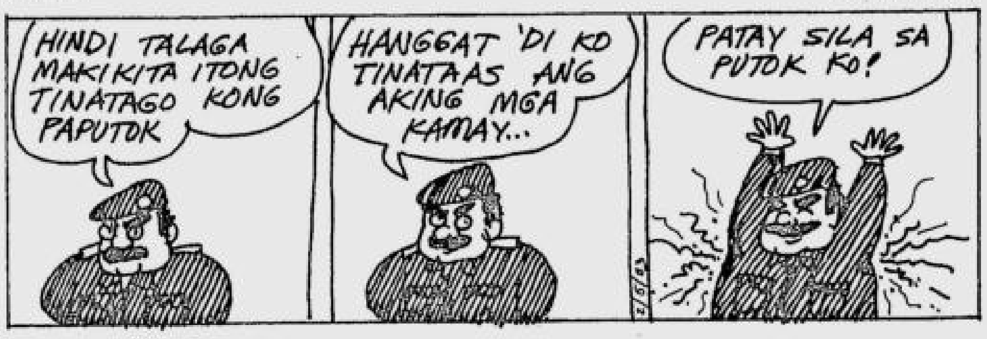
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


SO WHAT FUN THINGS DID YOU DO TODAY?
FUN? GOSH, WHERE TO START?
I WASHED EIGHT FUN LOADS OF LAUNDRY... I IRONED EIGHT FUN LOADS OF LAUNDRY... I FOLDED AND PUT AWAY EIGHT FUN LOADS OF LAUNDRY...
IT WAS PRETTY MUCH JUST ONE FUN PILE OF CLOTHES AFTER ANOTHER.
SEE, IT'S GOOD THAT YOU DO THAT STUFF, BECAUSE I DON'T ENJOY IT AT ALL.
AND THEN THERE WAS THIS FUN CONVERSATION...
2-6

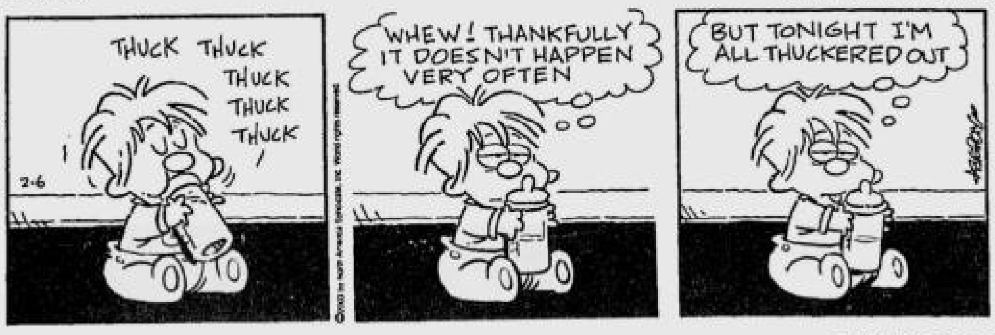
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


HINDI TALAGA MAKIKITA ITONG TINATAGO KONG PAPUTOK
HANGGAT 'DI KO TINATAAS ANG AKING MGA KAMAY...
PATAY SILA SA PUTOK KO!

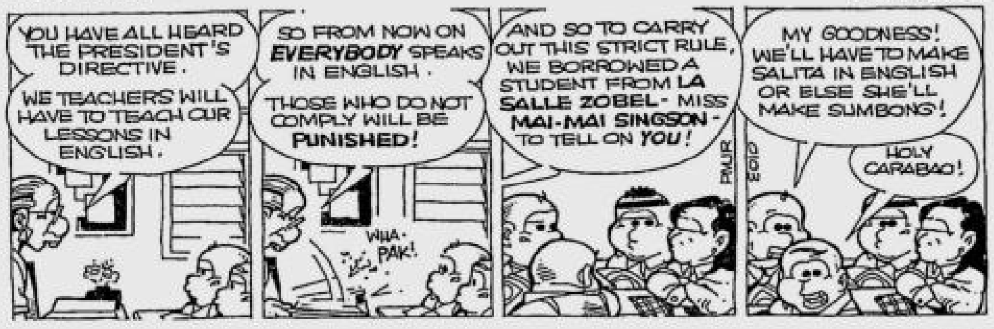
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


THUCK THUCK THUCK THUCK THUCK
2-6
WHEW! THANKFULLY IT DOESN'T HAPPEN VERY OFTEN
BUT TONIGHT I'M ALL THUCKERED OUT

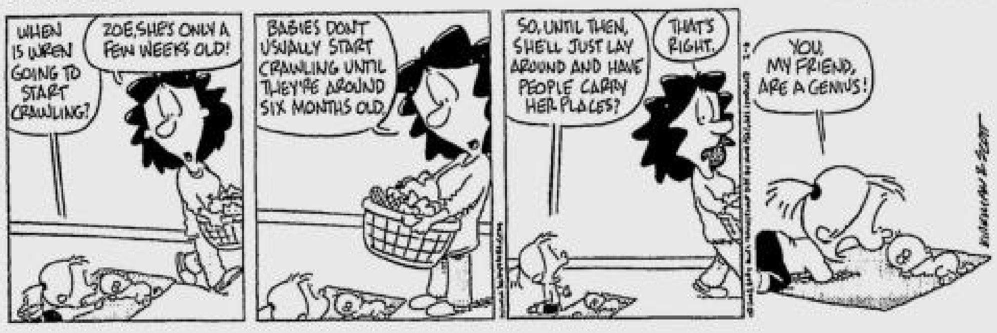
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


YOU HAVE ALL HEARD THE PRESIDENT'S DIRECTIVE.
WE TEACHERS WILL HAVE TO TEACH OUR LESSONS IN ENGLISH.
SO FROM NOW ON EVERYBODY SPEAKS IN ENGLISH.
THOSE WHO DO NOT COMPLY WILL BE PUNISHED!
WHA-PAK!
AND SO TO CARRY OUT THIS STRICT RULE, WE BORROWED A STUDENT FROM LA SALLE ZOBEL- MISS MAI-MAI SINGSON - TO TELL ON YOU!
MY GOODNESS! WE'LL HAVE TO MAKE SALITA IN ENGLISH OR ELSE SHE'LL MAKE SUMBONG!
HOLY CARABAO!

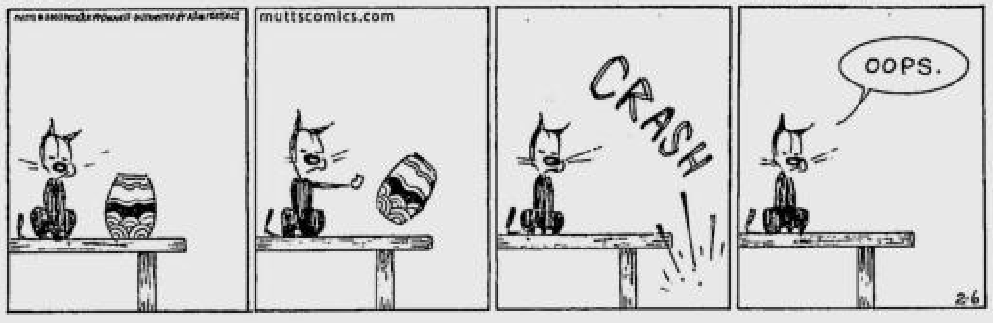
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WHEN IS WREN GOING TO START CRAWLING?
ZOE, SHE'S ONLY A FEW WEEKS OLD!
BABIES DON'T USUALLY START CRAWLING UNTIL THEY'RE AROUND SIX MONTHS OLD.
SO, UNTIL THEN, SHE'LL JUST LAY AROUND AND HAVE PEOPLE CARRY HER PLACES?
THAT'S RIGHT.
YOU, MY FRIEND, ARE A GENIUS!

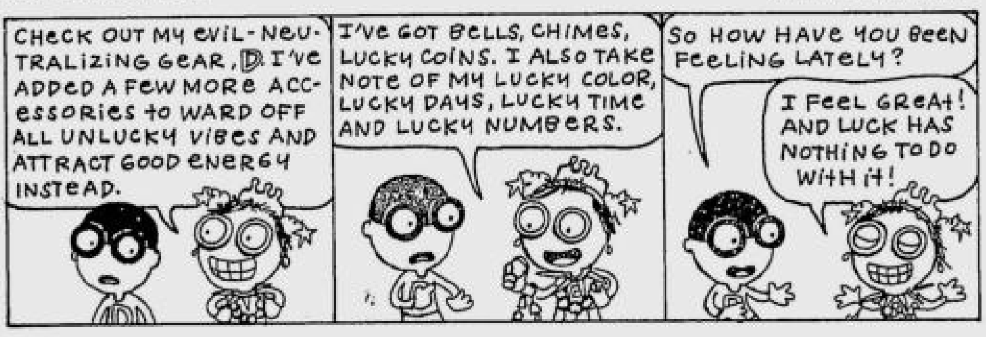
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


muttscomics.com
CRASH
OOPS.
2-6

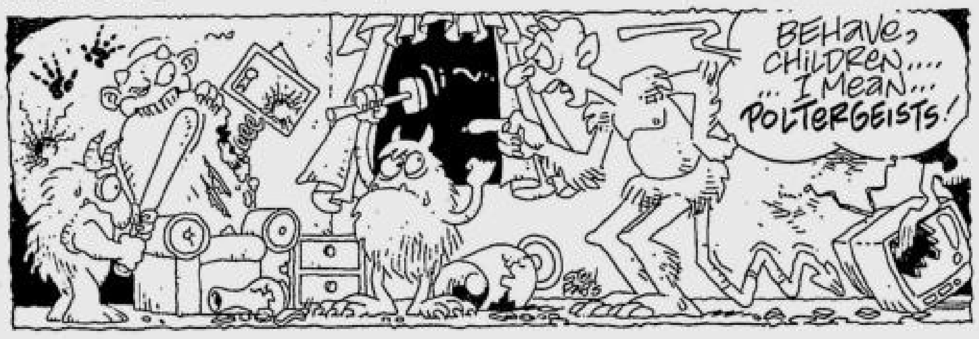
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


CHECK OUT MY EVIL-NEUTRALIZING GEAR, D. I'VE ADDED A FEW MORE ACCESSORIES TO WARD OFF ALL UNLUCKY VIBES AND ATTRACT GOOD ENERGY INSTEAD.
I'VE GOT BELLS, CHIMES, LUCKY COINS. I ALSO TAKE NOTE OF MY LUCKY COLOR, LUCKY DAYS, LUCKY TIME AND LUCKY NUMBERS.
SO HOW HAVE YOU BEEN FEELING LATELY?
I FEEL GREAT! AND LUCK HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH IT!

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


BEHAVE, CHILDREN.... ...I MEAN... POLTERGEISTS!

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Ronald Reagan, Tom Brokaw, Zsa Zsa Gabor, Axl Rose

Happy Birthday: Things may not go according to your plans this year, but if you are adaptable and willing to try new things, doors will open and progress can be made. This is your year to take action; you can make a difference in your own life as well as others. Your numbers are 6, 19, 23, 32, 37, 44

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Your impatience will get the better of you today. Try to be reasonable before you make an irreversible mistake. You can shape the outcome if you aren't pushy.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You will not be pleased with someone you feel is taking you for granted. Don't say something that might lead to a perilous situation. Get some rest and let everything simmer.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Keep your money in a safe place and do your research before paying for a membership or making a donation. Your hard-earned cash would be better spent on things you really desire.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Take a cautious approach when dealing with others. Remember that your choices will affect others and their responses will ultiately affect you.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Think about getting away for that long-overdue vacation. The preparation will ease your tension. Consider an adventure holiday that will require you to exert yourself.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Don't turn your back on an investment today. Money can be made if you are quick to react. Get the ball rolling.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Make sure that you have the OK before you make changes that will affect someone else. Your impatience with someone you work with will be hard to deal with. Criticism will follow if you make a mistake.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Doing something behind the scenes that you don't want others to find out about will backfire. Overindulgence will lead to trouble, so take it easy.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Take the initiative to start something new. Competition or a challenge will spark an interest; you need to shake things up and make some changes.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Don't participate in gossip or you will find yourself being blamed. Let someone around you who is disgruntled or emotional have some time and space to sort through their problems. Keep secrets to yourself.

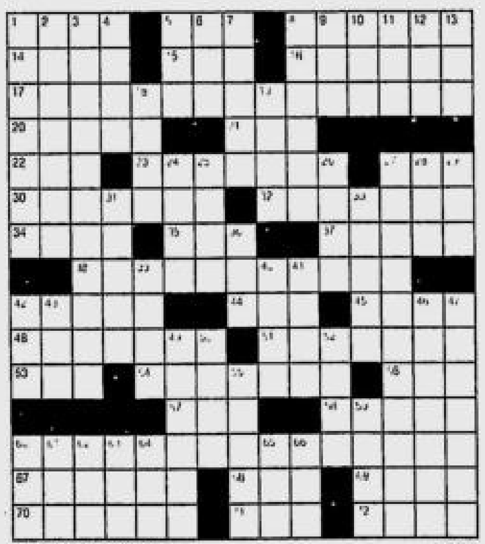
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Don't trust others with your ideas. You will affect your future if you aren't secretive about your intentions. You can reach your goals if you go about it smartly and with caution.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Finances will be on your mind especially if you can't make ends meet. Set up a strict budget and put money away for that much-needed vacation.

Birthday Baby: You will be quick to respond and to take action. You will want to be a leader and will find it difficult to take orders from others. You will be a doer, a mover and a shaker.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Actor Julia
5 __ es Salaam
8 Turn around
14 White-tailed eagle
15 Exploit
16 Beast
17 1988 West Coast song by 23A
20 African tongue
21 T. Turner channel
22 Pack animal
23 See 17A
27 Sailor's drink
30 Ousting
32 Cellular phone precursors
34 Emerald Isle
35 Misdeed
37 Why __ I think of that?
38 With 54A, Anthony Kiedis' group
42 Letter dress?
44 Soil turner
45 Gaelic tongue
48 Gives what is due
51 Former Canadian P.M.
53 Part of GPA
54 See 38A
56 Gear feature
57 Mai __ cocktail
58 Antonioni film, "La __"
60 1999 West Coast song by 38A
67 Puccini works
68 Sephia maker
69 Heavy reading?
70 Roberts or Bernadette
71 Bro or sis
72 Individuals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By Josiah Breward
Scranton, PA

2/6/03

DOWN
1 Mark anew
2 Exciter
3 Dull
4 Give temporarily
5 Entitle
6 Comparison phrase
7 Verso opposite
8 Noisemaker
9 Lennon's love
10 Spasm
11 Drs.' org.
12 Russian chess master
13 Actor Wallach
18 McDougald and Hodges
19 Rounded handle
24 Tie with a rope
25 Muse of history
26 "Star Wars" knights
27 Course change
28 Large vase
29 CO clock setting
31 Upright
33 Created stacks
36 Final degree
39 Profound
40 Sheep shed
41 Bonn mister
42 Southern constellation
43 Third bk. of the Bible
46 __ and Principe
47 Ormandy and McCarthy
49 Throw again
50 Ship's pole
52 Annapolis inst.
55 Sweet Williams and carnations
59 Italian eight
60 Flatfoot
61 Learn like a monkey
62 Tennis do-over
63 Pique
64 Remotely situated
65 Roman 3
66 Costly vehicle?

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

M	A	M	A	■	S	K	I	P	■	D	O	M	E	S
O	R	A	L	■	T	A	C	O	■	E	N	O	L	A
S	N	A	K	E	E	Y	E	S	■	L	E	T	O	N
S	O	M	A	L	I	A	■	T	A	E	■	O	P	T
■	■	■	L	A	N	K	Y	■	S	T	E	R	E	O
O	R	B	I	T	S	■	E	S	T	E	E	M	■	■
M	O	O	S	E	■	H	A	I	R	■	L	O	A	F
A	P	T	■	S	P	A	R	R	O	W	■	U	S	A
N	E	T	S	■	A	G	E	S	■	A	S	T	E	R
■	■	L	I	S	T	E	N	■	G	R	A	H	A	M
A	G	E	N	T	S	■	D	A	R	I	N	■	■	■
R	O	N	■	R	Y	A	■	N	E	E	D	H	A	M
M	O	O	R	E	■	P	O	K	E	R	F	A	C	E
E	S	S	E	S	■	S	I	L	K	■	L	I	D	S
D	E	E	D	S	■	O	L	E	S	■	Y	M	C	A

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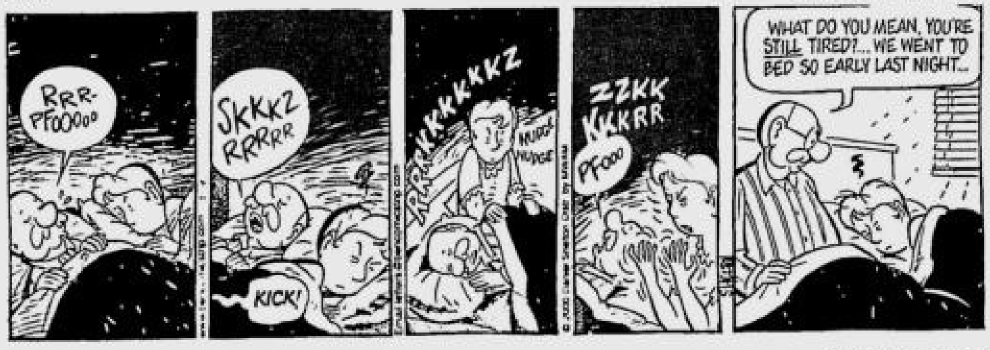
2/5/03

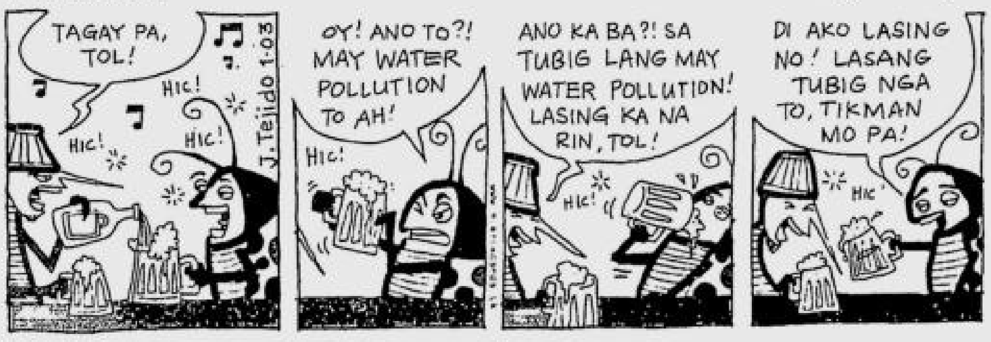
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


RRR-PFOOOOO
SKKKZ RRRRR
KICK!
KKKKKKKZ
NUDGE NUDGE
ZZKK KKKRR
PFOOO
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU'RE STILL TIRED?... WE WENT TO BED SO EARLY LAST NIGHT...

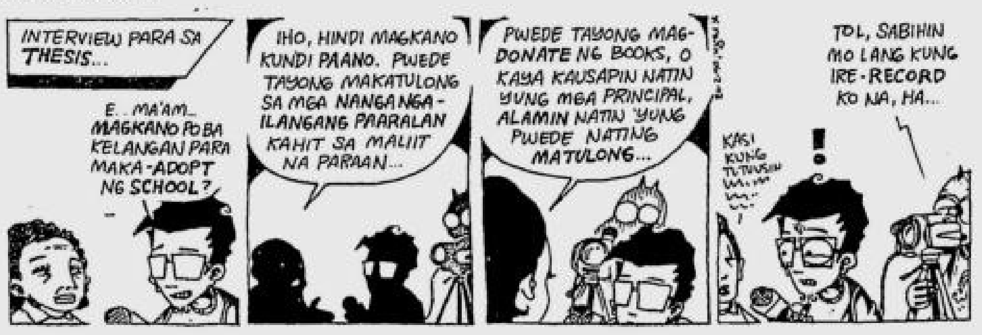
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


TAGAY PA, TOL!
HIC!
HIC!
HIC!
J. Tejido 1-03
OY! ANO TO?! MAY WATER POLLUTION TO AH!
HIC!
ANO KA BA?! SA TUBIG LANG MAY WATER POLLUTION! LASING KA NA RIN, TOL!
HIC!
DI AKO LASING NO! LASANG TUBIG NGA TO, TIKMAN MO PA!
HIC

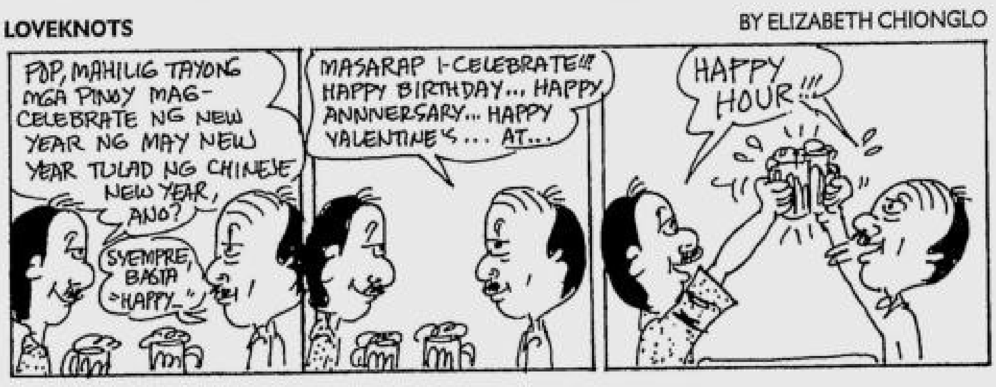
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


INTERVIEW PARA SA THESIS...
E.. MA'AM.. MAGKANO PO BA KELANGAN PARA MAKA-ADOPT NG SCHOOL?
IHO, HINDI MAGKANO KUNDI PAANO. PWEDE TAYONG MAKATULONG SA MGA NANGANGAILANGANG PAARALAN KAHIT SA MALIIT NA PARAAN...
PWEDE TAYONG MAG-DONATE NG BOOKS, O KAYA KAUSAPIN NATIN YUNG MGA PRINCIPAL, ALAMIN NATIN 'YUNG PWEDE NATING MATULONG...
TOL, SABIHIN MO LANG KUNG IRE-RECORD KO NA, HA...
KASI KUNG

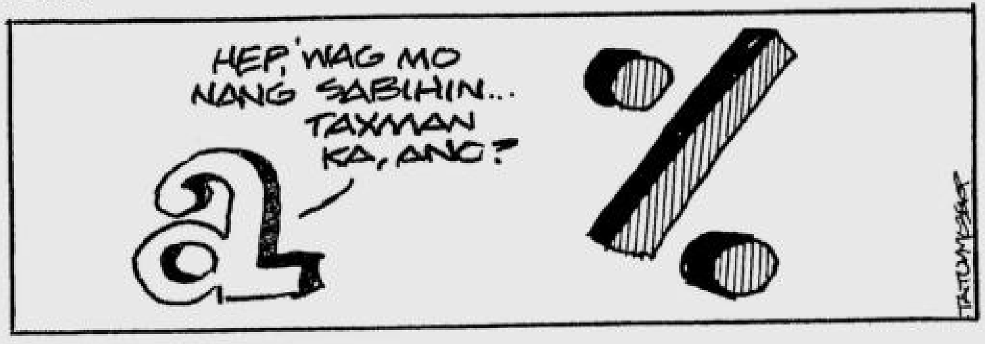
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


POP, MAHILIG TAYONG MGA PINOY MAG-CELEBRATE NG NEW YEAR NG MAY NEW YEAR TULAD NG CHINESE NEW YEAR, ANO?
SYEMPRE, BASTA "HAPPY..."
MASARAP I-CELEBRATE!!! HAPPY BIRTHDAY... HAPPY ANNIVERSARY... HAPPY VALENTINE'S... AT...
HAPPY HOUR!!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


HEP, 'WAG MO NANG SABIHIN... TAXMAN KA, ANO?
TATUM

MANGO balls in liqueur (top left); Mango crepes with spun sugar basket

LAPULAPU Loi (poached and simmered in mango sauce)

Come for the spa but stay for the food

From page D1

signed bathrooms and herb-based toiletries. Their new menu, she stresses, combines the same back-to-nature theme with the sheer indulgence of gourmet cooking.

Fresh and light

Chef Gomez, 50, who's also behind the food at Chateau Verde near UP Diliman, and Savarin at Kalayaan Street, Quezon City, took in the place and stayed overnight, mulling the menu. What he came up with was "soul food," says Palma, which she defines as "light, non-oily, with no MSG and no pork."

Most of the dishes were developed around Tagaytay's fresh produce. There are fruit slushes made from mango, *dalandan* and *guyabano* that Gomez himself plucks from the spa's spacious backyard, herb-laced dishes, as well as sauces and salad dressings from local fruits that give familiar food a piquant twist.

Among the new offerings on the menu are Shrimp-Mango Nurture; Langlang (chicken with green papaya); Cathy's Stuffed Chicken; Seafood and Fruits in Creamy Saffron Soup; Fried Quezo Blanco with Langka, Basil and Tomato; Chef's Salad with Assorted Fruit Coulis dressing; Chicken Ana with Honey-Orange Sauce, and Lapulapu Loi (poached and simmered in mango sauce).

For dessert, Gomez has folded luscious mangoes into paper-thin crêpes and spun sugar baskets over them. Another concoction has mango scooped into balls and served in liqueur with vanilla ice cream or topped with chocolate syrup.

Packages

To make sure that their comfort food lives up to its reassuring promise, the spa has included some of the dishes in their spa-and-massage packages, including a five-course menu, and has kept their prices rooted to the ground. Most of the appetizers are priced from P100, soup from P75, the fruit slushes from P50, the main dishes from P275, the healthy option dishes from P150, a five-course meal for P500, and for P300, a pasta and salad meal complete with dessert and choice of beverage. Of the 15 or 16 dishes on the menu, eight are considered healthy options, the rest a gastronomic tour of Tagaytay's nature-fresh offerings.

"The idea is to give diners a wide range of choices," says Gomez, who was among the 24 aspiring chefs sent on a Hotel and Restaurant Management scholarship in Germany by then First Lady Imelda Marcos in 1972. The Madame's high-profile projects had anticipated a boom in tourism and a corresponding need for first-class hotels with internationally trained staff to run them.

"I wanted to take up law," says this former waiter at the old Manila Hotel. He took the scholarship, he recalls, as a means to go abroad "and go TNT (become an undocumented migrant worker)." But his curiosity and natural affinity for good food got the better of him, and soon he was happily learning to make sausages, pig's knuckles, goulash, sauerkraut and apple strudel. These days, aside from training Nurture Spa's kitchen staff, Gomez also does home-catering and gives cooking workshops in his Tandang Sora, Quezon City home.

Here's a recipe for one of his specialties and easily the most popular healthy option dish at Nurture Spa.

Fried Tofu with Tomato Basil Sauce

1 tube Japanese tofu
250 g fresh tomatoes, chopped
5 g fresh basil
5 g chopped garlic
2 tbsp olive oil
Flour for coating tofu
Salt and pepper to taste

Cut the tofu into squares. Place in a bowl of water to retain shape.

Lift gently and roll into some flour.

Deep-fry until lightly brown. Set aside.

Heat the olive oil in a pan and put in tomatoes and basil.

Add salt and pepper to taste.

Arrange the fried tofu on a plate and pour tomato-basil sauce over it.

Serves two.

Call Nurture Tropical Spa & Café at 810-2024 or 830-2421, fax 813-6954 or e-mail nurturespa@excite.com

FRIED Tofu with Tomato-Basil Sauce

CHEF August Gomez and two of his creations: Stuffed Chicken with *langka* sauce and Lamb chops

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Efficient partner for homemakers

THIS season of love, treat the most important woman in your life to a nice surprise.

Give your mommy a tight hug and a Glad Ovenware this Valentine's Day. Glad Ovenware can be used when preparing, baking, serving, storing and reheating dishes. This means no more scrounging for the right serving dish or searching for a container to store leftovers, only to transfer it to another container to reheat. Cooking is light and easy with Glad Ovenware.

The product features a heat-resistant, oven-safe (up to 400°F or 205°C) and freezer-ready (-5°F or-21°C) pan with a sturdy microwaveable lid that snaps on for easy storage. Available in two sizes, Glad Ovenware is the innovative, convenient and cost-efficient pantry partner for the modern, busy homemaker.

Glad Ovenware is available at the Landmark Supermarket, Kitchenworks at the 2/F of Ali Mall, Cubao, Heny Sison's School of Cake Decorating and Baking, and Dorothy Ferreria's Cooking School.

GLAD OVENWARE
3
GLAD OVENWARE
8x8 Pans & Lids
Pans & Lids

IWFS hosts lecture on coconut; supports Vino Toast

THE INTERNATIONAL Wine & Food Society (IWFS), Manila Ladies Branch, in cooperation with the United Coconut Associations of the Philippines (UCAP) and Fiesta Brands, will be hosting a lecture and lunch at the McKinley Room of Manila Polo Club, on Feb. 24 at 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. on the health benefits of coconut fat and oil.

An indigenous food and nut that has nourished Filipinos and other nations in the tropics for thousands of years, the coconut is a beverage, a source of protein, carbohydrates, minerals and a basic cooking oil. However, it has gotten a lot of negative publicity worldwide in recent years because of its high saturated fat content and because international markets have pushed for the use of their own polyunsaturated vegetable oils.

This lecture aims to bring about a renaissance in the use of coconut oil, its health benefits as well as versatility in offering a wide range of flavors, textures and cuisine.

Pia Lim-Castillo will present a paper entitled "Coconut fat is good." In the afternoon, Beth Romualdez will give demonstrations on the uses of extra virgin coconut oil in food.

Space is on a first-come, first-served basis, at P350 per person. This fee includes lunch and information material.

Reservations are necessary. E-mail foodtravel@mac.com no later than Feb. 17. Indicate the names of the attendees and the contact number where you can be reached for confirmation.

The IWFS also supports the Vino Toast Expo slated on June 25-28 at the World Trade Center, Metro Manila. Vino Toast aims to gather distributors, retailers and makers of alcoholic beverages from all over the world.

Call 687-0654/2955, 845-1324, 759-6680 or visit www.foodandbeverageexpo.com.

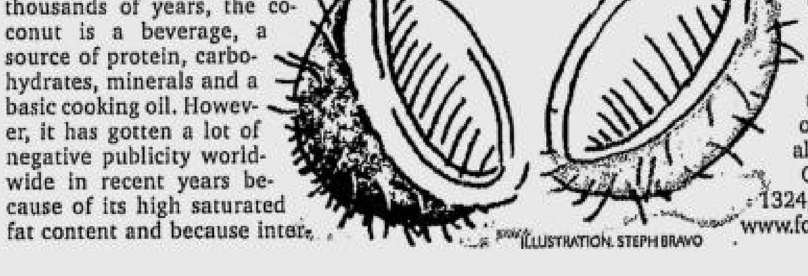


ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

See you in (food) court

By Jasmine W. Payo

FOOD courts are mall staples. Conveniently located in one section, they are a satellite of restaurants and kiosks offering varied fare to a wide range of fickle-minded diners.

As Samuel Gatchalian, Starmall food court operations manager, says, "The success of a food court is the mix, the wide variety of food offered."

The food courts of old offered a dining experience that wasn't exactly ideal. The conventional mess-hall look and the frenzied atmosphere brought back memories of your high school cafeteria. Most of the food tasted bland, and you knew they could not possibly be fresh or healthy.

In some malls this condition still exists but because fast-food prices are so affordable, they cannot help but be crowd drawers.

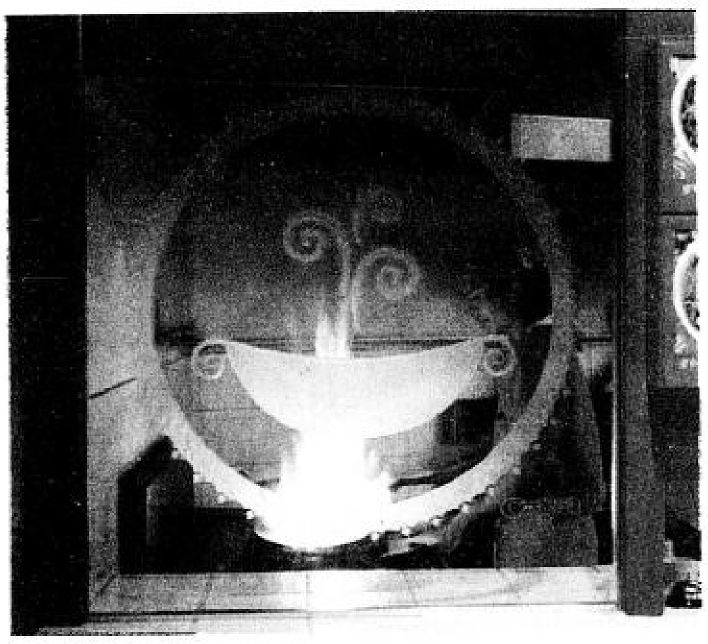
Enter the new crop of food courts that try to be atypical. Some offer even more choices and delicious meals, while others go a step further and provide entertainment or better ambience.

Here's a fast look at some food courts.

Eastwood

Located on the second level of Athena Building in Eastwood, Libis, the Eastwood Food Court opened late last year. The 250-seater area is relatively small, providing a feel of dining inside a restaurant. Come lunch time, employees from the different offices in Eastwood start coming in. Although there are only five concessionaires to choose from, they were obviously carefully selected—Red Bamboo (Japanese), Xiong Mao Kitchen (Chinese), Sizzling Mine (steaks and sizzling), Khai (Korean and Thai fusion) and Kusina (Filipino). There's also Jefe Bar which serves sodas, fruit shakes and juices, milkshakes, coffee and alcoholic beverages.

VIBRANT color patterns and murals brighten the Eastwood Food Court.



FOOD is prepared in full view in a wok in Ceya, Food Choices of Greenbelt 3.

The Eastwood Food Court also veers away from the usual boring setting. With its murals and red-and-orange floor pattern, it has a hip and modern look. On certain nights, it offers free entertainment with live band music. The Eastwood Food Court is open Monday to Saturday.

Riverbanks

Diners are guaranteed a cheap meal in the Riverbanks Food Court in Marikina. For P100, you can get lunch and dessert for two. But the choices are typical food court fare—there's the usual sizzling place (Thumpers Sizzling Plates, Lolay's Ihaw at Sabaw), Filipino (Laing Hauz, Dam's Food, Griddle and Grill), fast food (Texas Chicken, 3M Pizza Pie, Johnny's Fried Chicken), Chinese (Katmai Food) and Japanese (Mr. Shoo Lee). For snacks, there are also kiosks offering hotdogs, fishballs, doughnuts, popcorn, chicharon and ice cream.

The Riverbanks Food Court can accommodate more than 250 diners. The round tables are quite small, though, for a group of four. But unlike most cramped food courts, tables are far apart, making the entire area look spacious.

Starmall

The food court on the second level of Starmall, Shaw Boulevard, doubles as an entertainment area. There's a stage for programs and talent contests, plus, there's an open videoke area and an OTB (off-track betting) nearby. So if you don't mind the frenzy, choose from Chin's Express and Mong-kok (Chinese), Sizzling Express, Inihaw Express, Pares-Pares, Cebu Fiesta, Tasty Fresh and Gloria's Special Goto (Filipino). For snacks, there's 3M Pizza Pie, Sony Da Ichiban (fishballs, kikiam), Chicharific (*chicharon*) and Icecapades (ice cream and coolers). Meal options are apparently not too diverse, but one unique stall is The Bar, which serves reasonably priced cocktail drinks and alcoholic beverages.

The Starmall Food Court has tables in bright orange and green. It has a 300-plus seating capacity.

Metropolis

There is no lack of grill and sizzling in Metropolis Food Court, Alabang. They all seem alike, so the challenge is to select the better-tasting meal. Located at the basement, it features Grill House, Rice Surprise Toppings, Steak Break, Kinutsara Express and Teddy-Kath Seafood Express. Other options offer Filipino cuisine: Flavorite, Mae-Ron, Tacean Foods, Millennium and the familiar Goto King.

For snacks, there are kiosks around the 400-plus-seater food court that sell hotdogs, salad, *bibingka*, *chicharon*, pizza and *pan de sal*. But more light meals are offered in the food court extension. There are new concessionaires offering burgers, sandwiches, *takoyaki* and *gyoza*, squid and fish balls.

Greenbelt 3

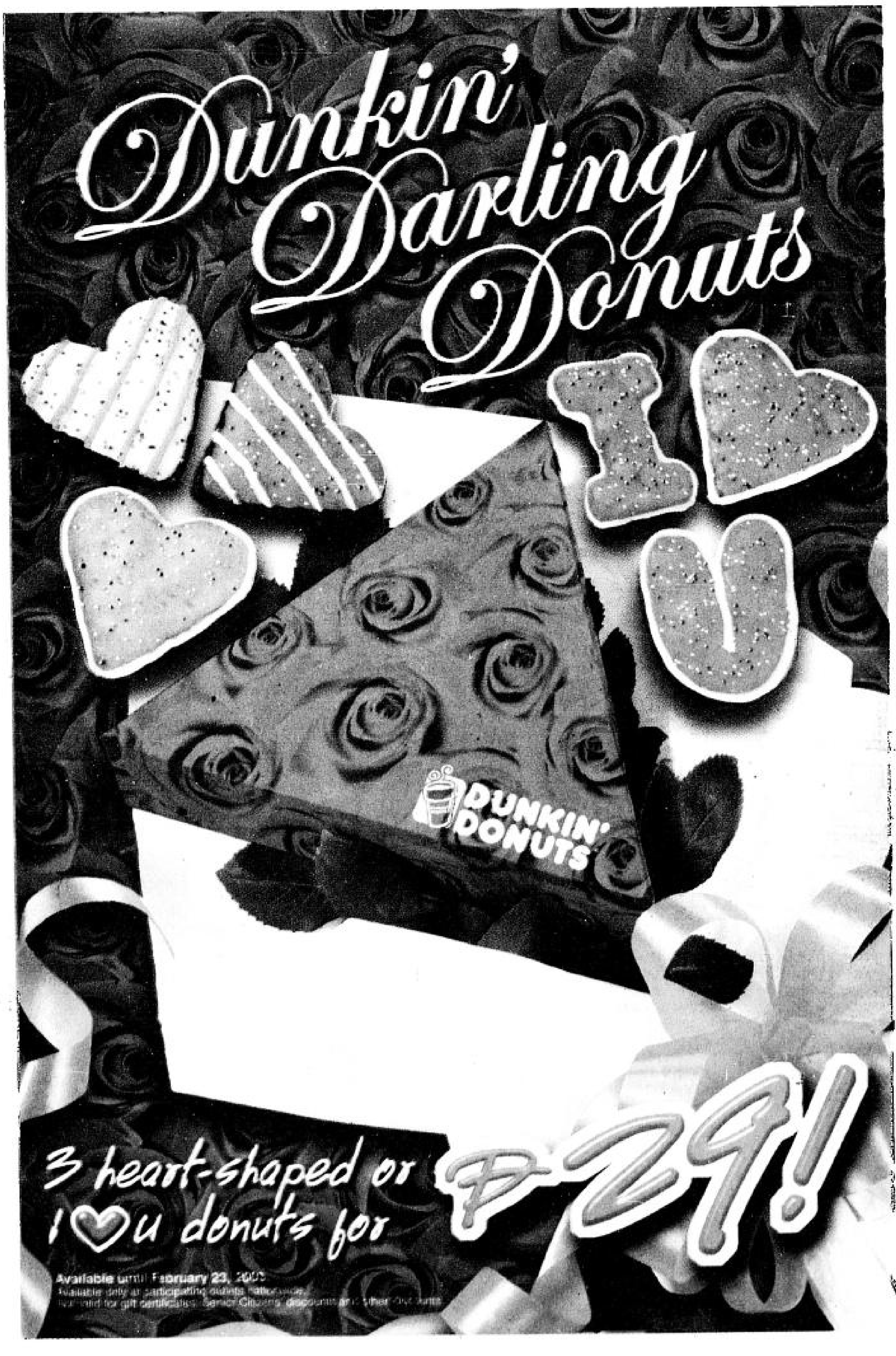
Considered as one of the high-end food courts, Food Choices in Greenbelt 3 has been getting good reviews for its diverse food selection and sumptuous meals. Accommodating around 800 diners, it also deviates from the dull setting with its murals and vibrant colors and patterns.

Each of the 11 concessionaires offers a different type of cuisine—Shin Kanzen (Japanese), Gloria Mari's Wok (Chinese), Mama Nita's (Filipino), Ceya (Asian Food), Circo (steak and seafood), Tender Bob's Express (American), Thai BBQ (Thai), Andale (Spanish), Sorabol (Korean), Bellini's La Pasta Italiana (Italian) and Toast (sandwiches, soups, salads).

Even the kiosks are apparently well selected. Other tasty treats in Food Choices include Taqueria Chilanga (Mexican), Matahari (Indonesian deli), Pazzo Gelato (ice cream), Sabrett (hotdogs), Cheesecake Etc. (pastries) and Candy Corner. Affordable cocktails and alcoholic drinks are also served in Bar Ciao.

> The new crop of food courts offers more choices and delicious meals, while others go a step further and provide entertainment or better ambience

MORE snacks are offered in the new food court extension of Metropolis, Alabang.



Available until February 23, 2003